"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

LATE EDITION

Today, mostly sunny, breezy during the afternoon, high 68. Tonight, becoming cloudy, staying dry, low 56. Tomorrow, cloudy, occasional rain, high 68. Weather map, Page A24.

VOL. CLXXII .... No. 59,793 © 2023 The New York Times Company NEW YORK, FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2023 $4.00



MAURICIO LIMA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Denys, left, and Mykyta with their friends outside a shelled building in Sloviansk, Ukraine. "I wish I had an ordinary life," Mykyta said.

Supreme Court Delivers 2 Wins To Tech Giants

Legal Shield for Users' Posts Holds, for Now

By ADAM LIPTAK

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court handed twin victories to technology platforms on Thursday by declining in two cases to hold them liable for content posted by their users.

In a case involving Google, the court for now rejected efforts to limit the sweep of the law that frees the platforms from liability for user content, Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act.

In a separate case involving Twitter, the court ruled unanimously that another law allowing suits for aiding terrorism did not apply to the ordinary activities of social media companies.

The rulings did not definitively resolve the question of what responsibility platforms should have for the content posted on and recommended by their sites, an issue that has grown increasingly pressing as social media has become ubiquitous in modern life. But the decision by the court to pass for now on clarifying the breadth of Section 230, which dates to 1996, was cheered by the technology industry, which has long portrayed the law as integral to the development of the internet.

"Companies, scholars, content creators and civil society organizations who joined with us in this case will be reassured by this result," Halimah DeLaine Prado, Google's general counsel, said in a statement.

The Twitter case concerned Nawras Alassaf, who was killed in a terrorist attack at the Reina nightclub in Istanbul in 2017 for which the Islamic State claimed responsibility. His family sued Twitter, Google and Facebook, saying they had allowed ISIS to use their platforms to recruit and train terrorists.

Justice Clarence Thomas, writing for the court, said the "plaintiffs' allegations are insufficient to establish that these defendants aided and abetted ISIS in carrying out the relevant attack."

He wrote that the defendants transmitted staggering amounts of content. "It appears that for *every minute* of the day, approximately 500 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube, 510,000 comments are posted on Facebook, and 347,000 tweets are sent on Twitter," Justice Thomas wrote.

And he acknowledged that the platforms use algorithms to steer users toward content that inter-

Continued on Page A15

LIBERALS BALKING AS BIDEN WEIGHS G.O.P. DEBT OFFER

BITTER ISSUE IN TALKS

Backlash Over Attempt to Make Safety Net Cuts Part of Deal

By CATIE EDMONDSON

WASHINGTON — Speaker Kevin McCarthy's demand that any deal to raise the debt limit must include stricter work requirements for social safety net programs — and President Biden's hints that he might be willing to accept such a bargain — has drawn a backlash from liberal Democrats in Congress, underscoring the tricky politics at play in bipartisan talks to avert a default.

The proposal has become a central issue in negotiations between Mr. Biden and Mr. McCarthy, which entered a new phase this week as the two offered glimmers of hope that they could reach a deal to increase the borrowing limit, now projected to be reached as early as June 1, and avoid an economic catastrophe.

House Republicans' debt limit bill, approved last month along party lines, would impose stricter work requirements for beneficiaries of food stamps, Medicaid and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and the speaker said this week that Republicans would insist on such a provision as part of any deal. Mr. Biden has pointedly left the door open to the idea, noting that he voted for work requirements as a senator.

Talk of such a compromise has set off a wave of anger among liberals on Capitol Hill, who have begun openly fretting that the president might agree to a deal they cannot accept.

"I cannot in good conscience support a debt ceiling proposal that pushes people into poverty," said Senator John Fetterman, Democrat of Pennsylvania.

The pushback reflects the political crosscurrents at play in the talks between Mr. Biden and Mr. McCarthy, both of whom have to contend with slim majorities in Congress and uncompromising political bases that will find any agreement hard to swallow.

The hard-right Freedom Caucus called on Mr. McCarthy on Thursday to stop negotiating with White House officials until the Senate passed House Republi-

Continued on Page A18

Ailing Senator Also Sustained Brain Swelling

By ANNIE KARNI and CARL HULSE

WASHINGTON — When she arrived at the Capitol last week after a more than two-month absence recovering from shingles, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Democrat of California, 89, appeared shockingly diminished.

Using a wheelchair, with the left side of her face frozen and one eye nearly shut, she seemed disoriented as an aide steered her through the marble corridors of the Senate, complaining audibly that something was stuck in her eye.

Ms. Feinstein's frail appearance was a result of several complica-



KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Senator Dianne Feinstein last week, returning to the Capitol.

tions after she was hospitalized for shingles in February, some of which she has not publicly disclosed. The shingles spread to her face and neck, causing vision and balance impairments, and facial paralysis known as Ramsay Hunt syndrome. The virus also brought on a previously unreported case of encephalitis, a rare but potentially debilitating complication of shingles that a spokesman confirmed on Thursday after The New York Times first revealed it, saying that the condition had "resolved itself" in March.

Characterized by swelling of the brain, post-shingles encephalitis can leave patients with lasting memory or language problems, sleep disorders, bouts of confusion, mood disorders, headaches and difficulties walking. Older patients tend to have the most trouble recovering. And even before this latest illness, Ms. Feinstein had already experienced substantial memory issues

Continued on Page A16

Long Isolated, Syria Rejoins Arab League

By VIVIAN NEREIM and RAJA ABDULRAHIM

When a devastating earthquake struck in February, President Bashar al-Assad of Syria spotted opportunity in disaster. He called for an end to international sanctions on his country and within days, some were suspended. Other Middle Eastern states sent planeloads of aid and senior officials from those countries soon followed for the first high-level visits in years.

In the three months since, Mr. al-Assad has made a remarkable comeback, going from more than a decade of near-total global isolation after a series of atrocities, to being welcomed back into the Arab fold with virtually no strings attached. And on Friday, he is expected to attend an annual summit of Arab leaders for the first time in 13 years, the most definitive sign yet that he is returning to the region's embrace.

Mr. Assad was shunned for brutally suppressing his country's Arab Spring uprising in 2011, which morphed into a civil war that has ground to a standstill, but has still not ended. His government stands accused of widespread torture, the use of chemical weapons against its own people and forced population transfers in a conflict that left hundreds of thousands of people dead.

"The fact that Assad is coming back strong and untouched, it is sending a signal to Arab leaders," said Dareen Khalifa, a Syria expert at the International Crisis Group. "At the end of the day, it has a huge impact, Assad having this victory lap in the region and dictators knowing you can get away with it."

Analysts said the Syrian war helped set the stage for what the world is now witnessing in Ukraine. The government's vicious crackdown on its own people and the survival of Mr. al-Assad's regime came in large part because of extensive military support from Russian President Vladimir V. Putin. But Russia was never held accountable for the attacks it carried out in Syria, including the targeting of hospitals.

And since the early salvos of Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year, the legacy of Mr. Putin's role in the Syrian war has loomed large. The Russians have used

Continued on Page A6

Robbed of Joy, Ukraine's Teens Laugh to Keep From Weeping

By ANDREW E. KRAMER

SLOVIANSK, Ukraine — The yawning crater, carved by a Russian missile strike and flooded with water, cut a jagged path through the middle of a city street. The small clique of teenagers passing by found it funny.

"Look, it's our local pond," said Denys, 15. "We could dive in for a swim."

In their baggy sweatshirts, backpacks looped over one shoulder, youths walk the streets of Sloviansk, a frontline town in eastern Ukraine, for lack of anything else to do on a spring afternoon.

They slip past soldiers in full combat gear, carrying rifles and headed to the trenches about 20 miles away, and watch military trucks rumble past, kicking up clouds of dust. They are living their teenage years in a holding pattern because of the war that rages around them — without prom, graduation ceremonies, movie theaters, parties or sports.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has caused tremendous direct damage, killing tens of thousands of people and forcing millions of Ukrainians from their homes. But the war has also claimed another casualty: the normal experiences of teenagers like those in Sloviansk who live near combat zones, hanging out in ravaged cities where rockets fly in regularly.

"I wish I had an ordinary life," said a 16-year-old named Mykyta.

His days, he said, have boiled down to walks with friends and playing video games in his room. "We studied this whole city, we know every corner," Mykyta said. "It's not so fun anymore."

During a meandering walk around town on a recent afternoon, a half-dozen teenagers said they mostly handled the hardships of war, and the terror of Russian attacks, with humor — making fun of everything around them, including one another. They are identified only by their first names because of their age.

Sloviansk, a small city on a crossroads that was briefly occupied by Russian proxy forces in

Continued on Page A8

In New York City, Outrage Over the Options for Housing Migrants

By LIAM STACK and JEFFERY C. MAYS

Since tens of thousands of migrants began arriving in New York City last year, the administration of Mayor Eric Adams has searched for one place after another to house them: hotels, parking lots, a cruise ship terminal and a pair of giant tents on Randall's Island among them. Almost every idea has caused an uproar.

Now, the daily stream of migrants feeding the crisis has doubled in size in recent weeks, city officials say. As many as 700 migrants are arriving each day in the city — up from less than half that number since the expiration last Thursday of Title 42, a Trump-era policy that allowed immigration officials to expel some border crossers back to Mexico.

With no clear solutions at hand, the city turned to shelter some migrants in public school gyms starting last week. That plan, like many others before it, was almost immediately met with outrage — not only from activists and human rights groups, but also from public school parents and the ranks of



BRITTANY NEWMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Rallying outside Public School 172 in Brooklyn against city plans to use its gym to shelter migrants.

everyday New Yorkers.

On Wednesday, the city began to distance itself from that proposal, too.

More than 67,000 migrants have arrived in New York City since the crisis began. Of those, 41,500 people are currently being cared for by the city, Anne Williams-Isom, the deputy mayor for health and human services, said at a news conference on Wednesday. She said 4,300 people had arrived in just the past week.

That new influx of arrivals has forced the Adams administration to contend with what was already a humanitarian and economic crisis that the city had spent $1 billion addressing so

Continued on Page A20



INTERNATIONAL A4-11

War and A.I. Are on G7 Table

The leaders will discuss familiar topics as well as a new one: how to regulate the use of artificial intelligence. PAGE A7

No Privacy in the Public Eye

For Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, leaving Britain has not spared them from unwanted attention. PAGE A10

NATIONAL A14-21

Ambassador Against Hate

As a new U.S. envoy combating global antisemitism, Deborah Lipstadt first acknowledges the surge in hate crimes at home. PAGE A14

It's Biden or Me, DeSantis Says

In a private phone call, the Florida governor told top donors that Donald J. Trump could not win. PAGE A16

OBITUARIES B11-12

Eccentric Real Estate Tycoon

Sam Zell also ventured into the media business in 2007, in a move that became a complete failure. He was 81. PAGE B12



SPORTS B7-10

Bigger Than Basketball

Brittney Griner, returning to a changed W.N.B.A. after her Russia ordeal, hopes to reshape women's sports. PAGE B7

Course Is Up to Its Old Tricks

Restored closer to its original design, Oak Hill Country Club flustered the P.G.A. Championship field. PAGE B8

BUSINESS B1-6

Disney Cancels Florida Project

A new office complex, and relocation of a division from California, would have created more than 2,000 jobs but was scuttled as the company and Gov. Ron DeSantis continue to feud. PAGE B1

TikTok Users Sue Montana

A court battle over First Amendment rights has kicked off after a group of enthusiasts challenged the state's ban on the video-sharing app, which is the first of its kind in the nation. PAGE B1

OPINION A22-23

Ross Douthat PAGE A22



WEEKEND ARTS C1-16

Mozart, With Ringtones

For his staging of "The Magic Flute," Simon McBurney created a modern sonic environment inspired by the opera's first production, in 1791. PAGE C1

VISIT…

LANZAROTE Caliente.com

Inside The Times

The New York Times

A. G. SULZBERGER
Publisher

Founded in 1851

ADOLPH S. OCHS
Publisher 1896-1935

ARTHUR HAYS SULZBERGER
Publisher 1935-1961

ORVIL E. DRYFOOS
Publisher 1961-1963

ARTHUR OCHS SULZBERGER
Publisher 1963-1992

ARTHUR OCHS SULZBERGER JR.
Publisher 1992-2017

NEWS

JOSEPH KAHN
Executive Editor

MARC LACEY
Managing Editor

CAROLYN RYAN
Managing Editor

SAM DOLNICK
Deputy Managing Editor

MONICA DRAKE
Deputy Managing Editor

STEVE DUENES
Deputy Managing Editor

CLIFFORD LEVY
Deputy Managing Editor

MATTHEW ERICSON
Assistant Managing Editor

HANNAH POFERL
Assistant Managing Editor

SAM SIFTON
Assistant Managing Editor

KARRON SKOG
Assistant Managing Editor

MICHAEL SLACKMAN
Assistant Managing Editor

OPINION

KATHLEEN KINGSBURY
Opinion Editor

PATRICK HEALY
Deputy Opinion Editor

BUSINESS

MEREDITH KOPIT LEVIEN
Chief Executive Officer

DIANE BRAYTON
General Counsel

ROLAND A. CAPUTO
Chief Financial Officer

JACQUELINE M. WELCH
Chief Human Resources Officer

WILLIAM T. BARDEEN
Chief Strategy Officer

R. ANTHONY BENTEN
Chief Accounting Officer, Treasurer

ALEXANDRA HARDIMAN
Chief Product Officer

DAVID S. PERPICH
Publisher, The Athletic

JOY ROBINS
Global Chief Advertising Officer

DAVID RUBIN
Chief Brand and Communications Officer of The Times, and Publisher, Wirecutter

JASON SOBEL
Chief Technology Officer

HANNAH YANG
Chief Growth and Customer Officer

Contact the Newsroom
To contact the newsroom regarding correction requests, please email corrections@nytimes.com.

Submit a Letter to the Editor
letters@nytimes.com

Send a Confidential News Tip
Reach us through tools that will help protect your anonymity at nytimes.com/tips.

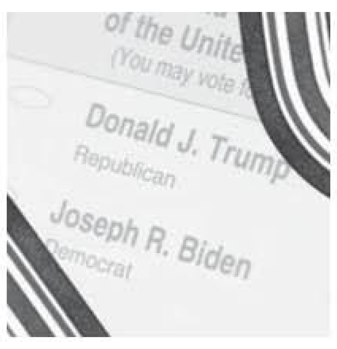
Contact Customer Care
customercare@nytimes.com or call 1-800-NYTIMES (1-800-698-4637)

The Newspaper and Beyond

TODAY'S PAPER

Corrections A21	Opinion A22-23
Crossword C15	Weather A24
Obituaries B11-12	Classified Ads B4







VIDEO In a Times Opinion video, Chaim Levin described the struggle of growing up in a Orthodox Jewish community as a gay young man and enduring conversion therapy, which made matters worse for him. *nytimes.com/video*

AUDIO Millions of voters are dissatisfied with the prospect of another Trump-Biden matchup. Could there be an alternative? Astead W. Herndon explored the possibility on "The Run-Up" podcast. Listen at *nytimes.com/therunup.*

T LIST Find out what piqued the interest of the T Magazine team, including a thatched-roof resort that reopened on Hawaii's Big Island, playful lamps and resort wear that benefits an elephant conservation group. *tmagazine.com*

Quote of the Day

"There's nothing here. But I don't want to leave."

MYKYTA, *16, of Sloviansk, a town in eastern Ukraine that is bombarded by Russia about once a week in a war that has stolen the normal events of teen life. Page A1.*

The Story Behind the Story



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CC ALLEN

Celestino García, left, rolls bagels by hand six days a week. He showed his craft to Priya Krishna, host of "On the Job," a YouTube series.

An Early Start With One of the Last Bagel Rollers

A New York Times web show follows the unsung workers shaping what New Yorkers eat.

By SARAH BAHR

It's dark. It's 39 degrees outside. And it's 2:40 a.m.

At a bus stop in the Sheepshead Bay neighborhood of Brooklyn, Celestino García, wearing a black puffer jacket, jeans, gray Skechers and a black North Face backpack, has already started his day.

Mr. García, 58, cranes his neck to look for the B3 bus, which will take him to the Avenue U subway station. He will then catch the F train and head to his first workplace of the day, Court Street Bagels in Cobble Hill. There, he will roll hundreds of bagels — by hand.

CC Allen, a supervising producer for the New York Times Cooking video team, and Gina Fernandez, an associate producer, followed Mr. García on this particular Friday in March for the first episode of the new season of "On the Job." (The episode appears on YouTube on Friday afternoon.) Hosted by Priya Krishna, a Food and Cooking reporter, "On the Job" tells the stories of some of the hardest working people in the city: the labor force shaping what and how New Yorkers eat. Each episode is about 10 to 20 minutes long and spotlights a day in the life of someone like Mr. García, who is one of the city's last bagel rollers.

Mr. García is used to the early call time. Six days of his week begin in the middle of the night. For members of The Times's Food team, it was a little tougher to get out of bed, though well worth it.

Ms. Krishna met the group at the bagel shop at 5:45 a.m. By then, Mr. García had already filled sheet pans with fluffy bagels and was getting ready to head into Manhattan to the Avenue A location of Tompkins Square Bagels, the second of three shops he works at over the course of a 15-hour day. He zipped up his jacket and started his commute, the Times team in tow.



Most bagels are now shaped by machinery.

Spotlighting the efforts of people such as Mr. García, who make New York delicacies or work tirelessly to feed the city, was one of Ms. Krishna's goals when she began the series in January 2022.

"One thing about every person we follow for 'On the Job' is that they do an incredibly difficult job," Ms. Krishna said. "And they believe their job is not difficult."

Planning for an episode of "On the Job," which is in its third season, begins months before filming. For each episode, a team of video producers interviews three or four potential subjects. They typically select a job to focus on before finding a person to follow, Ms. Allen said in an interview.

Once the producers have identified the right person, they visit the site to answer any questions their subject might have and ask if there is anything — like secret recipes — that the person would prefer not be filmed. The team members plan out a shot list weeks in advance, broken down into about a dozen scenes, with a list of two to eight shots they hope to get for each.

But some of the best footage is captured during the moments they can't predict.

In the latest episode, that was video of Mr. García's bagel-rolling speed — Ms. Krishna timed him at 17 bagels per minute, or about 3.5 seconds per bagel.

"He's like the Energizer Bunny," Ms. Krishna said as Mantai Chow, a video journalist for the Cooking team, zoomed in on Mr. García's hands kneading the dough.

As Mr. García worked, Ms. Krishna asked him, in Spanish, about his life, routine and passion for his job. Viewers have praised Ms. Krishna's warm, easygoing demeanor and frequent use of Spanish — one of four languages she speaks — to put her subjects at ease. (Estefania Valencia, a translator, was also on set.)

"It helps me establish a rapport," Ms. Krishna said, noting that Spanish is often the first language of the workers she features, many of whom, like Mr. García, are immigrants.

Mr. García finished rolling 1,700 bagels in four hours, a little over an hour ahead of schedule. (It took nine 50-pound bags of flour.) Ms. Krishna joined him on his six-block walk to his next and last stop, another location of Tompkins Square Bagels. She likes to get a sense of a person's entire day to truly understand what the job entails.

Inside, he went down to the basement, where he donned a black apron. The smell of cinnamon wafted through the room.

"New location, new energy," he said.

Ms. Krishna, taking a seat on an overturned white bucket, faced the camera and offered her own assessment. "I can't say I have the same pep in my step," she said as Mr. García began mixing the dough for a batch of bright yellow French toast bagels. He had already worked a full day, yet appeared just as positive as he did when he started.

After a shoot is finished, Ms. Allen's team will review the footage, mixing camera angles and adding music, subtitles and voice-over narration. The process can be long and tedious. The final 15-minute episode on Mr. Garcia, for example, took over a month to edit.

"You might hate overshooting as an editor," Ms. Allen said. "But it's worth it to capture those precious moments that tell the actual true story of the person."

The team has five more episodes planned for the third season, which it hopes to publish every other month or so. Which probably means five more very early alarms.

"But it's worth it," Ms. Krishna said. "It's the only way you get an inside view of the process."

Today's Top Trending Headlines

Military Caught Airman Mishandling Secrets Before Arrest but Left Him in Job Air Force officials caught Airman Jack Teixeira taking notes and conducting searches for classified material months before he was charged with leaking government secrets, according to a Justice Department filing. He was not removed from his job at the time. A previous Times investigation had found that Airman Teixeira was fixated on weapons, mass shootings and conspiracy theories.

A Centuries-Old Mystery: Did This Elusive Viking City Exist? Andrew Higgins reported from Wolin, Poland, where new archaeological discoveries have experts wondering: Was a Viking city mentioned in ancient texts a literary fantasy or a reality? The city, Jomsborg, is said to be linked to a possibly mythical mercenary order known as Jomsvikings. Mr. Higgins interviewed historians about Jomsborg.

Study Offers New Twist in How the First Humans Evolved Scientists have revealed a surprising origin story of our species, and rejected the argument that humans arose from one place in Africa during one period in time. By analyzing the genomes of 290 people, researchers found that humans descended from at least two populations that coexisted in Africa for about a million years. Carl Zimmer interviewed an evolutionary archaeologist about the study's findings.

After a 'Kill Shot' to the Eye, a Wrestler Restarts His Life Rich Perry was an Olympic hopeful when he sustained a gruesome brain injury at a wrestling training camp in 2018. Jeré Longman interviewed Mr. Perry about his recovery. "My story inspired hope in a lot of people. I wouldn't change having to go through this if I could," Mr. Perry said.

A Headline From History

MISS COCHRAN TOPS THE SPEED OF SOUND

May 19, 1953. Jacqueline Cochran, a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force Reserves and one of the nation's leading fliers, became the first woman in history to break the sound barrier, The Times reported. Cochran also set a new international speed record for the 100-kilometer closed course of 652 miles-per-hour. She accomplished the feat in a Canadian-built F-86 Sabre jet fighter over Edwards Air Force Base in California. Cochran, who learned to fly as a private businesswoman in the cosmetics industry, received a Distinguished Service Medal for leading the Women's Airforce Service Pilots program during World War II. The Times noted that she was urged by friends to give up flying while she was "still ahead of the game." By the time she died in 1980, Cochran had set over 200 records in aviation.

THE NEW YORK TIMES COMPANY
620 Eighth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018-1405

The New York Times (ISSN 0362-4331) is published daily. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The New York Times, 620 Eighth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018-1405.

Mail Subscription Rates*	1 Yr.	6 Mos.
Daily and Sunday	$1196.00	$598.00
Monday-Saturday	1092.00	546.00
Sunday only	624.00	312.00
Times Book Review	$286.00	
Large Print Weekly	$166.40	

Higher rates, available on request, for mailing outside the U.S., or for the New York edition outside the Northeast: 1-800-631-2580.

*Not including state or local tax.

The Times occasionally makes its list of home delivery subscribers available to marketing partners or third parties who offer products or services that are likely to interest its readers. If you prefer that we do not share this information, please notify Customer Service, 620 Eighth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018-1405, or email help@nytimes.com.

All advertising published in The New York Times is subject to the applicable rate card, available from the advertising department. The Times reserves the right not to accept an advertiser's order. Only publication of an advertisement shall constitute final acceptance.

© 2023, The New York Times Company. All rights reserved.

A. G. Sulzberger, *Publisher*
Meredith Kopit Levien, *President and Chief Executive Officer*
R. Anthony Benten, *Treasurer*
Michael A. Brown, *Corporate Secretary*

Facts of Interest

Harald Bluetooth, a Danish Viking king who died near the end of the 10th century, is celebrated as a unifier of feuding Nordic fiefs and the inspiration for the name of a wireless technology designed to unite devices.

Does a Charred Ruin Mark the Site Of an Elusive Viking City? A4

The English director Simon McBurney's production of Mozart's "Die Zauberflöte" ("The Magic Flute"), which opens Friday at the Metropolitan Opera, uses about 100 speakers strategically placed all over the house.

Winds Whisper, And the Birds Sing. It's Kind of Magical. C1

The Miami Heat have nine players on their 17-man roster who weren't selected in the N.B.A. draft, more than any team in the league.

Heat See Value in Players Snubbed In the Draft and 'Willing to Do Anything' B9

New York City officials found that it was possible to use trash containers on 89 percent of the city's residential streets, but it would require removing 150,000 parking spots.

New Rule Would Ban Trash Bags To Curb Rats A20

In the world of artificial intelligence, large language models (L.L.M.s) pinpoint patterns in the text they analyze and generate text of their own, including term papers, poetry and computer code.

Meta's Big A.I. Giveaway B1

Last year, private water and sewage companies in England sent sewage into rivers and seas for more than 1.75 million hours, amounting to 301,091 spills, or an average of 825 a day.

England's Water Companies Vow To Modernize Sewers A10

The Mini Crossword

■	1	2	3	4
5				
6				
7				■
8			■	■

5/19/2023 BY JOEL FAGLIANO

ACROSS

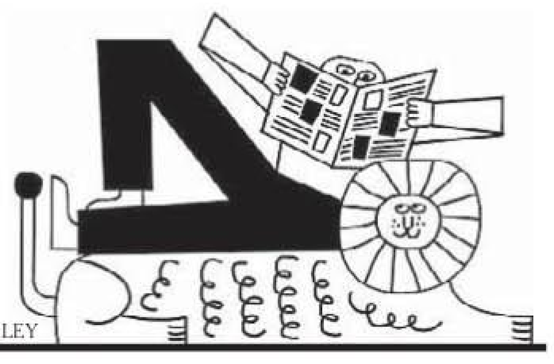
1 Old-timey "Holy cow!"
5 Big meanie
6 Group of organized workers
7 With 5-Down, cinema lover
8 Added logs to, as a fire

DOWN

1 Bert's pal on "Sesame Street"
2 Group of organized workers
3 Something that's around a quadrillion times smaller than a speck of dust
4 Bear's lair
5 See 7-Across

SOLUTION TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

■	S	U	F	I
J	E	S	U	S
O	P	E	R	A
K	I	R	B	Y
E	A	S	Y	■



MARCUS OAKLEY

Reader Corner

Responses and Replies

The Next Pandemic, a Times Opinion newsletter, explores the lessons we can learn from Covid-19. Every week, readers submit questions for Dr. Caitlin Rivers, an epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. Here's one edited exchange.

Is it even really possible for us to plan for the next pandemic, considering the failure of the American people in the pandemic we are currently in?

— ELLEN C. CAMPBELL, NEW JERSEY

RIVERS: A lot went wrong in our response to the Covid-19 pandemic, but a lot also went right. Politicization, data troubles and confused messaging were persistent problems. But the race to develop safe and effective vaccines will appear in history books for generations. So, too, will the successful mass vaccination campaigns, the diagnostic infrastructure scaled to handle hundreds of millions of tests and the ascension of genomic epidemiology.

We need to capitalize on those strengths while shoring up our weaknesses. Failings, like poor communication and devastating inequities, must be appraised with an unflinching eye so we can make changes.

Sign up for The Next Pandemic: nytimes.com/newsletters.

Listen In

Excerpts From New York Times Audio



ANNA WATTS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ed Sheeran's 2014 hit ballad "Thinking Out Loud" won a Grammy Award for song of the year.

Earlier this month, a federal jury found that the musician Ed Sheeran did not copy Marvin Gaye's song "Let's Get It On" for his 2014 hit "Thinking Out Loud," a conclusion to a high-profile copyright infringement case that has been playing out over several years. Mr. Sheeran defeated a second copyright lawsuit over "Thinking Out Loud" this week when a judge dismissed the case. On the "Popcast" podcast, the host Jon Caramanica asked Ben Sisario, who covers the music industry for The Times, why pop stars are often attractive targets for lawsuits. Read an edited excerpt from their conversation below.

Is there not some implicit handshake among musicians and creators, like, Hey, we're all drawing from the same pool?

At a certain level, it's just about money. In the first "Let's Get It On" case, it wasn't one working musician against another. It was the estate of a deceased songwriter going after a famous artist and that's very common.

I don't think that there's some honor code that says that since they're musicians, they're not going to sue each other. The more famous the defendant is the more incentive there is to sue them, thinking maybe they will just settle.

I imagine it's fatiguing to be a successful musician, constantly be a target and know that other people view you as a potential payday.

Yeah, but it's also interesting to think that not everybody gets accused of this. This has happened to Ed Sheeran repeatedly. Ed Sheeran comes across as a sponge. He likes taking bits and pieces of other songs and putting them together. He likes writing songs in pretty simple, repetitive formats. In another context, we might view that as eclectic, that Ed Sheeran is somebody who is interested in different kinds of music and mingling them together. That's part of his strength and he has his own voice. But you could see that also makes him a target.

Listen to "Popcast" at nytimes.com/popcast.

Here to Help

A Recipe for Grilled Turkey Burgers

Coating these delicious turkey patties in a mixture of barbecue sauce and mayonnaise guarantees a seared and glazed exterior. **ALI SLAGLE**

TIME: 40 MINUTES
YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

- Neutral oil (such as canola), for greasing
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 4 tablespoons store-bought or homemade barbecue sauce
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- Kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal) and black pepper
- 4 hamburger buns
- Toppings (such as shredded iceberg, sliced onion, tomato and pickles) and condiments (mayonnaise, barbecue sauce or mustard), as desired



RYAN LIEBE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
FOOD STYLIST: SIMON ANDREWS

1. Heat the grill to medium-high. Lightly grease a plate and set aside. Coarsely grate ¼ cup onion; reserve the remaining onion. In a medium bowl, mix the turkey, grated onion and 2 tablespoons barbecue sauce. Form 4 patties about 4½ inches wide (about 5 ounces each). Press a small dimple in the center of each patty, then place the burgers on the plate and refrigerate until firm (at least 5 minutes or, covered, up to 2 days).

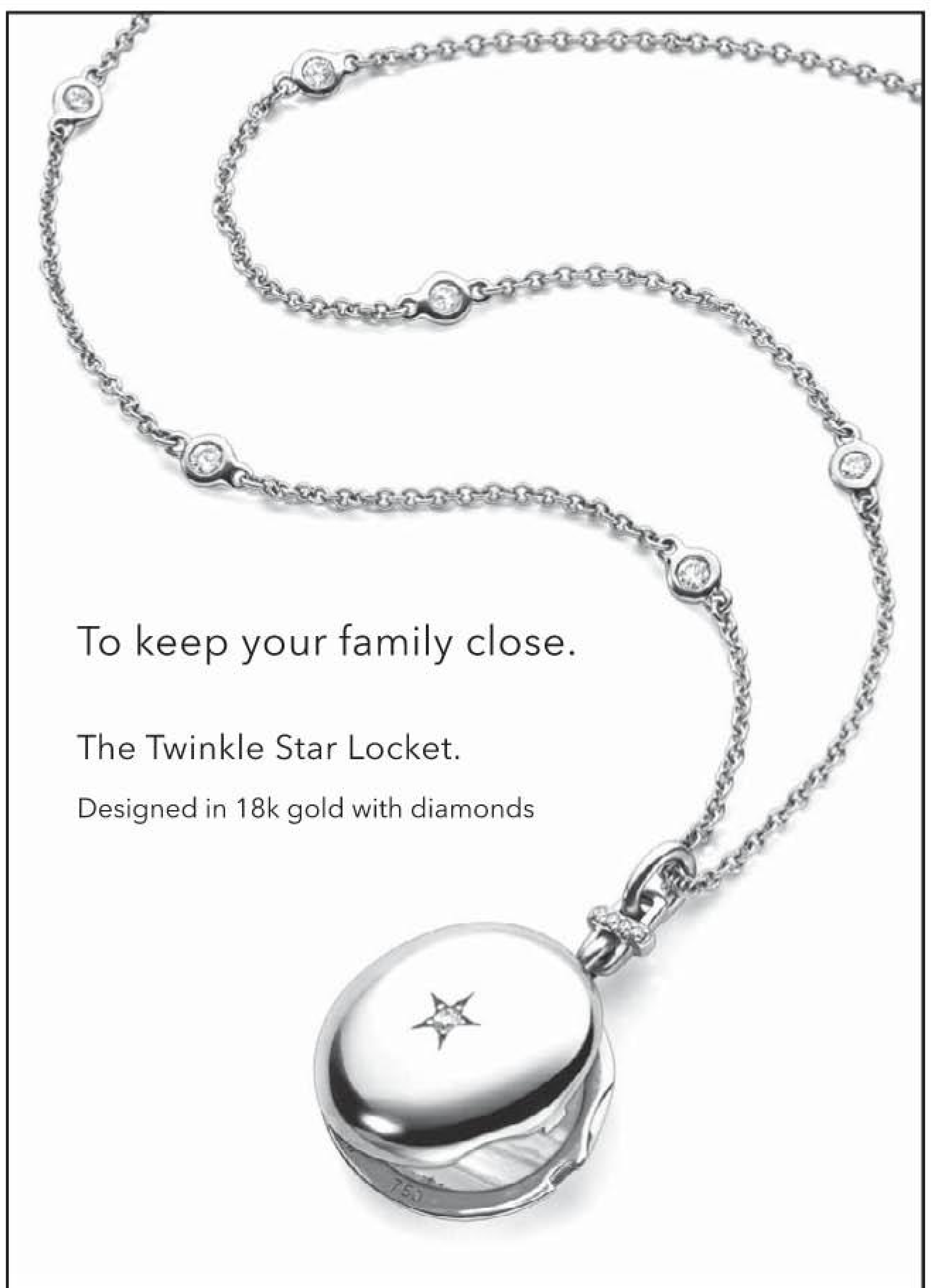
2. In a small bowl, stir together the remaining 2 tablespoons barbecue sauce with the mayonnaise; season with 1 teaspoon each of salt and pepper.

3. When ready to grill, dip the reserved onion in oil. Clean the grates with a grill brush, then grease the grates with the oiled onion. (This perfumes the grill and your patties.) Lightly coat the tops of the burgers with some of the mayo mixture (about ½ teaspoon per patty).

4. Grill the burgers, mayo side down, until well browned and patties release from the grates, 4 to 6 minutes. (If flare-ups occur, move to an area of the grill where there are no flames underneath. For a gas grill, close the lid between flips, listening and keeping an eye out for flare-ups.) Spread mayo mixture on the tops of the patties, then flip and grill on the second side until cooked through, another 4 to 6 minutes.

5. Transfer to a plate and let rest for at least 5 minutes. Grill the cut sides of the buns until toasted, 1 to 2 minutes. Build burgers on the buns with the patties and desired toppings and condiments.

For more recipes, visit New York Times Cooking at nytcooking.com.


To keep your family close.
The Twinkle Star Locket.
Designed in 18k gold with diamonds
MONICA RICH KOSANN
Please call 866.598.2784 or Visit Us at
MONICARICHKOSANN.COM

The New York Times
First Person
EVERY OPINION STARTS WITH A STORY.
A podcast about the experiences that shape our beliefs.
Listen wherever you get your podcasts.
nytimes.com/fp

T Store
From Our Archives to Your Walls

Photography and illustration reprints at
store.nytimes.com

The New York Times

POLAND DISPATCH

Does a Charred Ruin Mark the Site of an Elusive Viking City?

By ANDREW HIGGINS

WOLIN, Poland — After the local government decided to build an observation tower atop a sandy hill on Wolin, an island in the Baltic Sea, a Polish archaeologist was called in to check the site before construction and look for buried artifacts from the spot's macabre past.

Hangmen's Hill, a public park, had in earlier times been an execution ground, a cemetery and, some believe, a place for human sacrifices — so who knew what grisly discoveries were in store?

But what the archaeologist, Wojciech Filipowiak, found when he started digging caused more excitement than distaste: charcoaled wood indicating the remains of a 10th-century stronghold that could help solve one of the great riddles of the Viking Age.

Was a fearsome fortress mentioned in ancient texts a literary fantasy or a historical reality?

It has long been known that Nordic warriors established outposts more than a millennium ago on Poland's Baltic coast, enslaving Indigenous Slavic peoples to supply a booming slave trade, as well trading in salt, amber and other commodities.

Not known, however, was the location of the Vikings' biggest settlement in the area, a town and military stronghold that early 12th-century texts called Jomsborg and linked to a possibly mythical mercenary order known as Jomsvikings.

Some modern scholars believe that Jomsborg was never a real place, but instead a legend handed down and embroidered through the ages. The findings at Hangmen's Hill on Wolin Island might alter that view.

"It is very exciting," said Dr. Filipowiak, a scholar in Wolin with the archaeology and ethnology section of Poland's Academy of Sciences. "It could solve a mystery going back more than 500 years: Where is Jomsborg?"

Interest in Vikings, once largely confined to a niche field of academic study, has surged in recent years as television series like "Game of Thrones," movies, graphic novels and video games have embraced — and distorted — Norse themes, clothing and symbols. The Viking Age, or at least a rough approximation of it, has become a fixture of popular culture.

This has been good news for the tourism business in Wolin. "Vikings are sexy and attract a lot of interest," said Ewa Grzybowska, the mayor of Wolin, which includes a town and a wider island district with same name.

But the mayor bemoaned that far fewer visitors come to her domain than to a nearby beach resort. She said more money was needed to carry out excavation work and develop Wolin as a world-class destination for Viking researchers and amateur enthusiasts.

Pointing out of her window in City Hall to a square that is believed to contain a treasure of unexcavated early medieval artifacts, she said: "Wherever you go here, there is a piece of history."

That history, however, has often been a source of discord.

Nazi archaeologists scoured Wolin, which was part of Germany until 1945, for evidence of the presence of Vikings — and for proof of what the Nazis believed was the superiority of the Nordic race and its dominance in the early medieval period over local Slavic peoples, who later came to identify themselves as Poles and claimed the land for Poland.

When Poland took control of Wolin after World War II, Polish archaeologists hunted for artifacts that would enhance their country's hold on former German lands and help reinforce a sense of national identity.

Schools in Wolin organized re-enactments of Viking invasions of Poland's Baltic coast and, for decades after World War II, "far more kids wanted to be Slavs defending the island," said Karolina Kokora, director of Wolin's history museum.

That changed after Poland ditched communism and began turning West, away from Russia and its emphasis on Slavic pride. "After 1989, everyone wanted to be a Viking," Ms. Kokora recalled.

Public fascination with Vikings has also led to a surge in historical sleuthing by amateurs.

Among them is Marek Kryda, a Polish American amateur historian and author of a polemical 2019 book that denounced Polish archaeology as a morass of ethnic chauvinism mostly blind to the role Vikings played in the early formation of Poland.

Mr. Kryda set off a storm of controversy last summer in Poland after he announced in The Daily Mail, a British tabloid, that he had located the likely grave of Harald Bluetooth, the historical Danish Viking king who once ruled in this area.

The consensus view among historians is that Harald probably died in the region at the end of the 10th century but had been buried in Denmark.

Mr. Marek said he had placed Harald's likely burial mound in Wiejkowo, a tiny village inland from Wolin, by using satellite imaging. Dr. Filipowiak dismissed that as "pseudoscience."

The furor over where Harald Bluetooth is buried has turned the Viking king — celebrated as a unifier of feuding Nordic fiefs and the inspiration for the name of a wireless technology designed to unite devices — into an agent of noisy division.

Ms. Grzybowska, the mayor, said she was not qualified to judge whether Harald was buried in her district but added that she would be delighted if true. "It would add special splendor and grandeur to our island," she said.

Ms. Grzybowska's district has a Slavs and Viking Village, dotted with thatched wooden huts and a stone inscribed with runes celebrating Harald Bluetooth. But these are modern fakes — representations of a distant Viking past that excites the imagination but has been hard to pin down with certainty despite the decades of digging by archaeologists looking for traces of Jomsborg.

Ms. Kokora, the museum director, described the elusive 10th-century settlement as a "medieval New York on the Baltic" — a trading entrepôt with a mixed population of Vikings, Germanic people and Slavs — that had mysteriously vanished from the map, leaving only whiffs of its existence in archaic texts.

It is said to have had thousands of inhabitants, a fortress and a long pier to accommodate the Viking ships that sailed to and from Scandinavia and as far as North America. Traces of enslaved Slavs traded along the Baltic coast in the first millennium have been found thousands of miles away in Morocco.

Sifting through shards of excavated pottery on a cluttered table in her museum, Ms. Kokora said the Vikings hadn't bothered much with making pots and were not very good at it. "They just took from the Slavs," she said.

In the 1930s, German archaeologists, eager to challenge Polish claims that the area had originally been settled mainly by Slavs, excavated a mound on the opposite side of town from Hangmen's Hill in the hope of finding traces of Jomsborg — and proof that Scandinavians, an important pillar of the Nazi ideology of Aryan supremacy, had been there first. They found some artifacts but no evidence of a Viking stronghold.

Parts of Hangmen's Hill had been excavated before Dr. Filipowiak started digging, but not the area selected for construction. The archaeologist said his serendipitous find of what he thinks could be the ramparts of 10th-century Jomsborg's stronghold still needed more analysis, but he believes there is already "80 percent certainty" that this is the site.

The debate over Jomsborg's location — or if it really existed — has been "a very long discussion," Dr. Filipowiak said. "Hopefully, I can help end it."



PHOTOGRAPHS BY SERGEY PONOMAREV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Slavs and Viking Village in Wolin, Poland — with medieval craft demonstrations, re-enactments and guided tours — is a mere recreation.





Karolina Kokora, director of Wolin's history museum, noted that local sympathies used to be with the Slavs who defended the island. But that changed with the fall of the Soviet Union. "After 1989, everyone wanted to be a Viking," she said. Below, a rune stone honoring a Danish king, Harald Bluetooth.

'It could solve a mystery going back more than 500 years: Where is Jomsborg?'

WOJCIECH FILIPOWIAK, left, an archaeologist who found what may be the site of a 10th-century Viking fortress.



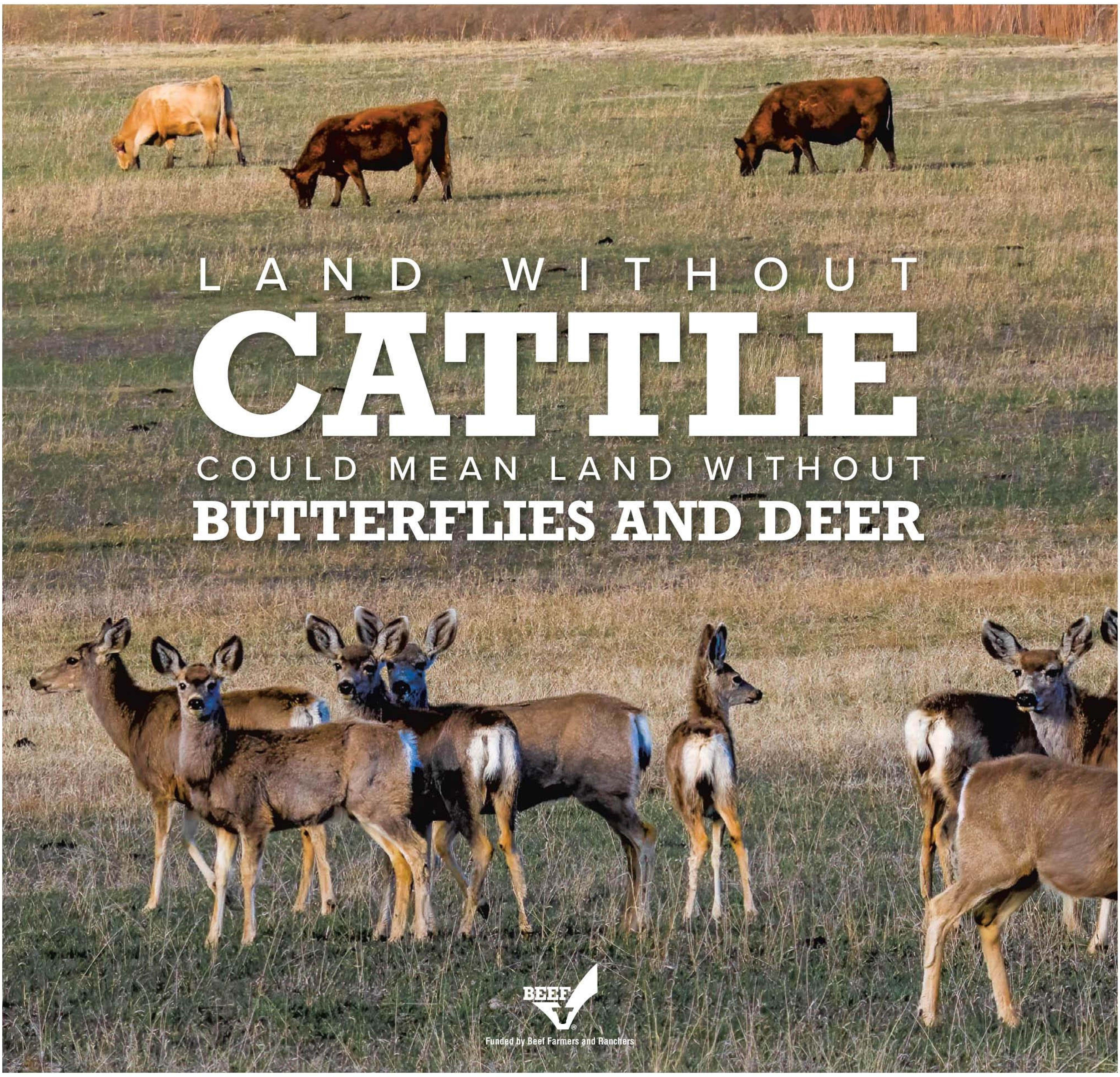


Photo taken in Douglas County, Colorado, April 2023.

Almost a third of U.S. land is too rocky or dry to be used for growing food crops. But cattle can graze on and regenerate that land, naturally protecting open space and conserving precious habitats and ecosystems.[1-2]

In fact, in the United States, animals and insects like hummingbirds, ducks, butterflies, ladybugs, elk, deer and even endangered species rely on the open land where beef cattle graze. Cattle ranching protects this land and preserves habitats that might otherwise be lost to development, forever displacing species and ecosystems we cherish.[1-3]

While caring for their animals, beef farmers and ranchers are also sustainably managing the land for future generations to enjoy.

Learn more by scanning the QR code

Barry, Sheila. 2021. Beef Cattle Grazing More Help than Harm for Endangered Plants and Animals.

Brunson, MW and L. Huntsinger. 2008. Ranching as a Conversation Strategy: Can Old Ranchers Save the New West? Rangeland Ecology & Management 61(2): 137-147.)

Maher et al. 2020. National and State Economic Values of Cattle Ranching and Farming-Based Ecosystem Services on Federal and Private Lands in the U.S. Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable Publication

An Isolated Syria Rejoins the Arab League for the First Time in 13 Years

From Page A1

some of the same military tactics used in Syria, such as sieges and starvation. The Syrian war offered other potential lessons for Mr. Putin, analysts said at the time, reinforcing that international norms could be violated without serious repercussions.

The Biden administration has sent mixed signals about Arab countries re-establishing relations with Syria, while making it clear that the United States has no plans to do so. Last week, a group of American congressmen introduced the Assad Anti-Normalization Act, a bid to hold Mr. al-Assad's government and its backers to account.

"Syria's readmittance to the Arab League signals to Assad that his barbaric behavior is acceptable," Representative French Hill, a Republican from Arkansas, said recently.

In February, Human Rights Watch urged Arab countries that were rushing to normalize ties with the Assad government to at least push for accountability and

Spotting opportunity after a devastating earthquake.

reforms. Without that, the group warned, the Arab states risk endorsing and supporting the Syrian government's widespread abuses.

Friday's meeting of the Arab League, hosted by Saudi Arabia in Jeddah, will be the first one that Mr. al-Assad has joined since 2010. And while his government is still subject to American and European sanctions, he does not appear to have paid a heavy price for readmission into the club of Arab leaders.

Mr. al-Assad, who arrived in Jeddah on Thursday evening, could face a tepid welcome at the summit, with members divided over whether and how to rebuild their relationships with the Syrian dictator. But his attendance alone is a powerful symbol.

Most Arab governments cut ties with Syria early in the war, as Mr. al-Assad's government laid siege to entire towns and sent millions of refugees fleeing to neighboring countries. The Arab League suspended Syria's membership in 2011 and Saudi Arabia, one of the leading regional powers, supported some of the rebel


IVOR PRICKETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES


EMILY GARTHWAITE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Above: Displaced Syrian families near the Turkish border, and residents sifting through rubble in Atarib in Aleppo province. Below: The deputy emir of Mecca, Prince Badr bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz, center, with President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, left, in Jeddah.



SAUDI PRESS AGENCY, VIA AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

groups fighting Mr. al-Assad's rule with funding and weapons supplied in covert coordination with the United States.

But as the years passed and Mr. al-Assad clung to power, regaining control over large parts of Syria, regional leaders shifted their approach.

Now, many deal openly with his government, arguing that shunning him accomplished little. This way, officials say, they can at least try to influence developments in Syria that affect the entire region, such as the flow of drugs across its borders and the fate of the millions of refugees who remain in neighboring countries, where officials say they have strained their resources and stirred resentment from citizens.

"For the past 11 or 12 years, there was this policy of maximum pressure and isolation to get some concessions from the regime," said Ibrahim Hamidi, a Syrian journalist and senior diplomatic editor for Asharq Al-Awsat, a Saudi-owned newspaper. "Now, the new approach is the other way around: Let us give more incentives to the regime, like legitimacy and political normalization, and in return we hope the regime will move on these fronts."

At a gathering in Jordan on May 1, a group of Arab foreign ministers pledged to convene a series of meetings with the aim of resolving the many problems stemming from Syria's long war. A week after the meeting, Arab League members voted to readmit Syria.

Their decision mentioned the importance of resolving "the burden" posed by refugees and the "danger of drug smuggling." Yet addressing those issues was not laid out as a precondition for Syria's return, which came into effect immediately.

"I don't think there are even asks, let alone conditions," Ms. Khalifa said.

The Syrian foreign minister, who attended the meeting in Jordan, agreed to take immediate steps to facilitate "the voluntary and safe return of refugees," according to a statement from the meeting. Syria also agreed to cooperate with Jordan and Iraq to stop the flow of illegal drugs across its borders — including the amphetamine captagon — and to "determine the sources of drug production and smuggling in Syria."

However, it is unclear whether Arab countries have any mechanism to enforce Syria's compliance with its promises.

Combating drug smuggling is of particular concern to Saudi Arabia — a major market for captagon — where officials declared a countrywide "war on drugs" last month. But in 2021, an investigation by The New York Times found that much of the production and distribution of captagon is overseen by the Fourth Armored Division of the Syrian Army, an elite unit commanded by Mr. al-Assad's brother, one of the most powerful men in the country.

Gulf powerhouses Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, longtime regional rivals of Iran, would like to see Mr. al-Assad curb the influence of Tehran, his close ally. But there is little indication so far that the Syrian government will oblige.

Proponents of readmitting Syria say that the status quo was unworkable.

Syria's absence from the Arab League was a "strategic mistake," Libyan columnist Jibreel al-Obaidi wrote in Asharq Al-Awsat on Monday. Reintegrating it into the region is necessary to reduce foreign influence in the country — including that of Iran, Russia, Turkey and the United States, he argued.

All four of those countries intervened in the Syrian war, backing either the government or various opposition groups.

Even in the Gulf, where re-engagement with Syria is well underway, many are uncomfortable with normalizing relations.

"Hopefully we remember the torment of the Syrian people when meeting al-Assad," read the headline of an opinion article in the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Qabas, by the columnist Hamed al-Humoud.

However the only government that has openly expressed opposition to normalizing relations with Mr. al-Assad is Qatar's.

"The Syrian people are still displaced, innocent people are in prison," Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said last month. "Qatar's decision as a country, individually, is to not take any step unless there's political progress."

Ahmed Al Omran contributed reporting from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and Hwaida Saad from Beirut, Lebanon.

Sudan's War Can Take Several Paths. Aside From Peace, They're Abysmal.

By DECLAN WALSH

NAIROBI, Kenya — The fighting that erupted in Sudan's capital one month ago surprised few, the culmination of soaring tensions between rival military leaders. But what has shocked many is the scale and ferocity of the war engulfing Africa's third-largest country, a conflict that has killed about 1,000 people and prompted one million more to flee their homes.

It could soon get much worse.

As American-led efforts to broker a cease-fire have floundered in recent days, Sudan experts, including former government officials and Western diplomats, have taken to the drawing board to imagine the conflict's trajectory and how bad it may become. In interviews, they agreed on one thing: The immediate outlook is bleak.

"We thought through several scenarios," said one senior European diplomat who, like others working to broker a peaceful solution, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters. "None of them ends well."

The immediate challenge is that the warring factions — Sudan's military, led by Gen. Abdul Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, led by Lt. Gen. Mohamed Hamdan — still believe that a military victory is possible, regardless of the cost.

Launching an appeal for $3 billion in emergency aid on Wednesday, the United Nations said that 25 million Sudanese, more than half the population, need help.

But the greater danger, many warn, is that Sudan's conflict will metastasize into a full-blown civil war that not only shatters the country into pieces, but also draws in foreign powers looking to back a winner.

The gloomiest predictions point to the region's dismal precedents — a catastrophic state collapse akin to Somalia's in the 1990s or a chaotic free-for-all driven by meddlesome outsiders like the state of Libya since 2011.

Sudan is a vulnerable giant at the heart of a volatile region. It has 4,200 miles of land borders with seven other African nations, most already grappling with conflict or drought. Although poor by global standards, Sudan has rich reserves of gold, water and oil, and overlooks one of the world's busiest shipping lanes on the Red Sea, which makes it a coveted geopolitical prize.

Here are some possible directions for Sudan's war.

If the military wins, expect a return to authoritarian rule.

Until now, the belligerents have seemed evenly matched in military terms. The Sudanese military has, perhaps, twice as many troops, as well as fighter jets, helicopter gunships and tanks. The Rapid Support Forces, or R.S.F., are a more nimble and battle-tested group that can move quickly, using pickups mounted with heavy guns.

Their main battleground is the capital, Khartoum. If the military were to dominate the city, it would likely be cheered by residents infuriated by the plunder and abuses of the R.S.F., whose fighters control much of the city center. But victory would not be easy.

To rout the R.S.F., the army would most likely intensify the airstrikes that have already flattened much of central Khartoum, leaving the victor with a devastated city. And it might need further help from a key backer, Egypt, a former colonial power viewed with deep hostility by many Sudanese.

To win convincingly, the military would have to kill or capture the elusive General Hamdan and his powerful brother, Abdul Rahim Dagalo. Otherwise, a rump R.S.F. could retreat to its stronghold in the western region of Darfur and spark a new insurgency from there.

Both sides claim to want a democratic future for Sudan. In reality, a triumphant military might push the country back to the authoritarian-style rule of Omar Hassan al-Bashir, the dictator of three decades who was ousted by a popular uprising in 2019.

A military victory might also facilitate a return of the Islamists — Bashir-era loyalists and religious conservatives who have been angling for a route back to power.

If the R.S.F. wins, it'll cause a political earthquake.

Once a commander of the feared Janjaweed militias, General Hamdan has in recent years sought to refashion his image as a champion of the dispossessed — ethnic groups from Sudan's outlying regions that have long suffered discrimination at the hands of what he calls a chauvinistic Khartoum-based elite.

But although the R.S.F. might portray victory as a necessary political revolution, it would struggle to gain widespread support. Wartime abuses by its fighters, including rape, have heightened existing hostility toward the group in Khartoum and northern Sudan. Residual military units, unwilling to accept General Hamdan's leadership, would most likely fight on, analysts say.

An R.S.F. victory might also draw alarmed neighboring countries deeper into the fray.

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt has made little secret of his disdain for the R.S.F., which he views as unacceptable rulers of Sudan. To the west, Chad had adopted a more neutral public stance.

But Chad's leaders also distrust General Hamdan and have privately indicated a willingness to intervene on the side of Sudan's military if necessary, according to an American official briefed on Chad's position who spoke anonymously to discuss a private conversation.

An Egyptian intervention in Sudan could further complicate matters if its regional rival, Ethiopia, is lured to the fight. Egypt and Ethiopia have been in dispute for years over a giant hydroelectric dam that Ethiopia is building on the Nile River close to its border with Sudan.

The other wild card is Russia, which has cozied up to General Hamdan, hoping to gain naval access for its warships to Port Sudan, on the Red Sea. An R.S.F. victory could also be good news for Wagner, the Kremlin-backed private military company that mines for gold in Sudan and uses Sudanese territory to cross into the Central African Republic, where it fights alongside government forces.

If a stalemate develops, the neighbors may try to jump in.

The most volatile scenario involves a divided country, with both sides controlling different areas, and neither capable of outright victory, several experts said. State institutions would collapse. And foreign powers, hoping to back a winner, might be tempted to intervene.

Some have already tried. American officials say that Wagner offered surface-to-air missiles to General Hamdan in the opening days of the fighting.

As recently as last year, the R.S.F. also received military equipment from the United Arab Emirates, a rich Persian Gulf country with a growing record of shipping weapons to its favored proxies in the region.

The U.A.E. and Saudi Arabia have invested billions of dollars in Sudan in recent years, seeing it as a potential future food supply base.

African neighbors might also want to defend their interests — not just Egypt and Ethiopia, but also Eritrea, the tiny country east of Sudan, whose dictatorial ruler has a long history of military interference in the region.

A stalemate could also cause Sudan to rip apart from internal pressures.

Decades of civil conflict have left the country with numerous armed groups in the Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile regions. Though they have stayed out of the war so far, they could easily leap into the melee to settle scores or protect their interests.

Negotiated peace is the hope that, for now, remains distant.

Peace efforts led by American and Saudi mediators in the Saudi port city of Jeddah have yet to produce a cease-fire. But the hope is that they might pave the way for a rapid deployment of peacekeepers to Sudan, most likely from the African Union, which would, in turn, facilitate top-level negotiations to forge a durable settlement.

For now, that is a distant prospect. Any real peace would likely need to involve Sudan's prodemocracy groups, which have so far been excluded from the talks in Jeddah. Critics say that is an ominous sign, suggesting major powers could strike a deal, in the name of peace, that entrenches the generals who started the war.

Another possible path to stopping the fighting involves coordinated pressure from foreign backers of the rival generals. But those backers have clashing goals for Sudan: While African and Western countries want democracy, Arab powers and Russia would prefer a more pliant autocracy, analysts say.

Whatever Sudan's fate, experts say, the country is at a major crossroads, perhaps its most wrenching moment since independence in 1956 — a high bar in a country that has endured numerous rebellions, coups and waves of genocidal violence.

"You can't rule anything out," Endre Stiansen, Norway's ambassador to Sudan, said in an interview. "Which is why the two sides needs to come together to stop the fighting."



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

A civilian convoy formed in Khartoum, Sudan, last week in support for the Sudanese armed forces.

Ukraine and China Top G7 Agenda, Along With a New Threat: A.I.

By DAVID E. SANGER

HIROSHIMA, Japan — President Biden began his foreshortened Asia trip on Thursday in Hiroshima, a city that devotes itself to reminding the world of what happens when a brutal war escalates into a nuclear one. There he prepared for discussions with his closest allies on two crucial issues: how to better arm Ukraine as it enters its counteroffensive against the Russian invaders, and how to slow, or halt, the downward spiral in relations with China.

Both are now familiar topics to the leaders of the Group of 7 nations, who have grown far tighter, and have remained surprisingly unified, since Russia began its assault on Ukraine 15 months ago. But at some point over three days of discussions, the G7 leaders are also expected to venture into new territory: the first conversations among the world's largest democratic economies about a common approach to regulating the use of generative artificial intelligence programs like GPT-4.

Artificial intelligence was not on the early agenda as Prime Minister Fumio Kishida invited the other six leaders — joined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India and, via video or in person, President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine — to the Japanese prefecture where he got his political start.



KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Biden walking into a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan on Thursday in Hiroshima, Japan.

But as the new artificial intelligence language model from OpenAI made nations around the world focus for the first time on the possibilities for disinformation, chaos and the physical destruction of critical infrastructure, Mr. Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, began calling counterparts to seek a discussion.

It is far from clear that this group of leaders — the G7 also includes Germany, Britain, France, Canada and Italy — can sustain a conversation on a technology that appeared to burst on the scene so quickly, even if it was years in the making. Past efforts to get the group to take up far more straightforward cybersecurity issues usually descended into platitudes about "public-private partnerships," and there has never been serious discussion of rules to guide the use of offensive cyberweapons.

American officials say that in the case of chatbots, even a vague foundational discussion may help in establishing some shared principles: that the corporations that bring products using the large-language models will be primarily responsible for their safety, and that there must be transparency rules that make it clear what kind of data each system was trained on. That will enable lower-level aides to discuss details of what those first regulations would look like, the officials said.

But as the G7 leaders convene starting on Friday, it will be Ukraine that will dominate the conversation, at a critical moment for Mr. Zelensky, for Ukraine and for the core Western democracies now seized with an urgent mission of bringing about what Mr. Biden calls the "strategic defeat of Russia in Ukraine."

Mr. Biden often says that Russia is already defeated. But the fear permeating the seven large democracies here is that unless the counteroffensive proves highly successful, Ukraine will settle into a bloody, frozen conflict in which the best hope would be an armistice, reminiscent of the one that brought a halt to fighting on the Korean Peninsula 70 years ago this summer.

Such a confrontation seemed almost impossible to imagine in 1997, when President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain invited Russia to become a full member of the group, expanding it — for nearly two decades — into the G8. Russia was "suspended" after its annexation of Crimea in 2014, and it withdrew from the group three years later.

Now, with his troops already seeking to destroy Russian weapons depots ahead of the counteroffensive, Mr. Zelensky just completed a series of rapid-fire visits to European capitals to shore up support for continued heavy spending on armaments and aid. He is expected to address the leaders in Hiroshima virtually, but there have been behind-the-scenes conversations about whether to take the risk of bringing him personally to the other side of the world to make his case.

Either way, he will have a large audience. In addition to India, the leaders of Australia, South Korea, Brazil, Indonesia and Vietnam will all be present as guests. It is part of a broader strategy by Mr. Biden and his allies to draw in nations that, to varying degrees, have been fence sitters on the Ukraine war, refusing to condemn Russia too harshly, to enthusiastically enforce sanctions, or to supply weapons to Ukraine.

Some of the core members are seeking to arm Mr. Zelensky in ways that may outpace Mr. Biden's willingness. When he was in Britain, Rishi Sunak, the prime minister, embraced Mr. Zelensky in a bear hug and told reporters, "They need the sustained support of the international community to defend against the barrage of unrelenting and indiscriminate attacks that have been their daily reality for over a year. We must not let them down."

Britain and the Netherlands have been pressing Washington to allow Ukraine to begin training on the use of F-16 fighter jets. But just as Mr. Biden was at first reluctant to turn over HIMARS and Patriot missile batteries and other technologies, he has been cautious about the F-16, a plane that could easily reach, and hit, the Kremlin.

So the United States seems likely to argue in Hiroshima that the fighter jets, while symbolically impressive, would be so expensive that they would come at the price of sending far more useful, inexpensive systems, including the air defenses that have proven surprisingly successful in taking down incoming Russian missiles. The apparent damage of at least part of a new Patriot missile battery in Kyiv this week has underscored the fact that such systems are precious.

Mr. Biden has consistently been cautious — overcautious in the minds of Mr. Zelensky and some NATO allies — about giving Ukraine weapons that he believes might lead to rapid escalation of the war and renewed threats by the Russian leader, Vladimir V. Putin, to use a tactical nuclear weapon.

Britain has just begun giving Ukraine another precision weapon with greater reach than the American-provided HIMARS, a missile system called Storm Shadow. Britain's foreign secretary, James Cleverly, told reporters in Washington last week that Mr. Putin's threats of escalation now ring more hollow, and that these "are gateways to which they are going to have to pass."

For Mr. Kishida, the host, navigating the nuclear issues will be unusually tricky. The summit will open with a visit by Mr. Biden to the landmark atomic dome, making him the second American president to see the site of the atomic bombing ordered by President Harry S. Truman. (President Obama came in 2016, and Mr. Kishida was one of his guides to the site.)

Like many Japanese political leaders, Mr. Kishida has pressed throughout his career for the gradual elimination of nuclear weapons. But he and other Japanese politicians also concede that Mr. Putin's threats have made American "extended deterrence" under its nuclear umbrella more vital to Japan's strategy now than it has been for years.

G7 officials will also be grappling with the downward spiral in relations between China and the United States. Mr. Sullivan, the national security adviser, spent two days in Vienna last week with Wang Yi, China's top foreign affairs official, in what was widely described as an effort to get communications going again after the U.S. decision to shoot down a Chinese surveillance balloon off the coast of South Carolina.

Officials have said little about the meeting, but it appears that China told Mr. Sullivan they are open again to visits from Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and, ultimately, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken.

Mr. Biden, who on Tuesday canceled additional stops on this trip in Papua New Guinea and Australia so he can return on Sunday to the United States to deal with debt ceiling negotiations, said on Wednesday he was trying to meet again with the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping. That is a sign that the freeze in relations in recent months may be beginning to let up, even if the fundamental dynamic between the United States and China, a growing nuclear power, has yet to change.

China Kicks Off a Summit of Its Own To Strengthen Ties With Central Asia

By NICOLE HONG

China's leader, Xi Jinping, is kicking off a summit on Thursday that the country is heralding as a historic milestone, rolling out the red carpet for five Central Asian countries that are critical to China's regional ambitions.

The inaugural China-Central Asia summit is part of China's broader aim to strengthen economic and political partnerships with like-minded countries, to counter what it sees as a U.S.-dominated world order that is trying to contain and suppress China.



POOL PHOTO BY FLORENCE LO

Chinese President Xi Jinping at the welcome ceremony Thursday of the China-Central Asia summit in the northern city of Xi'an.

Notably, Mr. Xi's summit was scheduled on the eve of the annual Group of 7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan, which begins Friday and will be attended by leaders of the world's wealthiest large democracies, including President Biden. A major topic for the G7 leaders will be how to address what the United States describes as China's growing assertiveness.

Mr. Xi has sought to deepen China's influence in Central Asia, part of his efforts to burnish his image as a global statesman. China greeted the leaders of five former Soviet republics — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — on the tarmac with a huge crowd of dancers and jumping children chanting: "Welcome, welcome! Warmly welcome!"

The two-day summit also points to China's interest in filling some of the void left by Russia, a key trading partner and longtime security provider for the region. Russia's war in Ukraine has weakened Moscow's influence in Central Asia, creating an opening for China.

"China has been trying to highlight more and more of these groupings and platforms where it is the center point, not the West," said Raffaello Pantucci, a senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. "It's part of the wider story that China is spinning, which is that there's another world order out there."

In a symbolic move, the summit is taking place in Xi'an, the city in central China that was a key stop on the ancient Silk Road trade route, which for centuries linked China with Central Asia and the Middle East.

Articles from Chinese state media outlets have hyped up anticipation for the meeting, describing it as a milestone in Chinese diplomacy and a "new model" in international relations. China's foreign ministry called it the first major diplomatic event hosted by the country this year.

China's interest in Central Asia stems from longstanding concerns about violence and ethnic tensions in the country's far western region of Xinjiang, which shares a border with Central Asian countries. China sees economic prosperity in the region as a way to further stabilize Xinjiang, analysts say.

China has invested billions of dollars into the pipelines, highways and railways that help bring Central Asia's rich reserve of natural resources into China. Many Chinese cities rely on natural gas from Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan has some of the world's largest oil fields outside the Middle East.

In 2013, Mr. Xi chose Kazakhstan as the site of the speech where he outlined the vision for his Belt and Road Initiative, a $1 trillion plan to build infrastructure projects in developing countries to draw them closer to China's orbit. Last year, Mr. Xi visited Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan for his first overseas trip since the pandemic started.

Still, the relationship has not always been smooth. Several Belt and Road projects in the region have stalled or been embroiled in scandal, including a power plant breakdown in 2018 that left much of Kyrgyzstan's capital without heat or electricity. Local residents have protested over concerns that their countries are becoming too indebted to China, and over China's internment of Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.

And Mr. Xi's ambitions in the region are complicated by his friendship with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, and by the two countries' close ties. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a former Soviet republic, has unnerved Central Asia, stirring concerns that Russia could try to seize other places formerly part of the Soviet Union, or encourage separatists.

Theresa Fallon, director of the Center for Russia Europe Asia Studies in Brussels, said China is engaged in a "tough diplomatic tap dance" of trying to gain an edge with Central Asian countries without angering Mr. Putin.

"China and Russia share an anti-Western narrative, but there are many areas of potential friction," Ms. Fallon said.

Antony J. Blinken, the United States secretary of state, also visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan this year, hoping to encourage the Central Asian countries to resist providing economic aid to Russia in the face of Western sanctions.

China is watching closely as a growing number of Western actors are wooing Central Asia, said Niva Yau, a researcher in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, who works as a nonresident fellow for the Atlantic Council's Global China Hub, a think tank.

In hosting the summit, Ms. Yau said, China aims "to give further reassurance to Central Asia that China will always be here, China is predictable, China is able to provide for the region."



BLUE VELVET
VAN CLEEF & ARPELS SAPPHIRE RING
Ceylon jewel. All natural. Important designer.



This exceptional unheated Ceylon sapphire totals an impressive 25.17 carats and exhibits the coveted velvety blue hue for which sapphires from this region are prized. The jewel is accompanied by an appendix letter from the Swiss Gemological Institute – an honor only bestowed upon the finest gemstones. Designed by famed French jeweler Van Cleef & Arpels, this breathtaking ring frames its ravishing center stone in approximately 2.75 carats of white diamonds. Set in platinum. Signed "Van Cleef & Arpels." #31-6778

Scan to view a video of this ring

M.S. Rau
FINE ART • ANTIQUES • JEWELS

622 Royal Street, New Orleans, LA • 888-988-5248 • info@rauantiques.com • msrau.com

Since 1912, M.S. Rau has specialized in the world's finest art, antiques and jewelry. Backed by our unprecedented 125% Guarantee, we stand behind each and every piece.

War In Ukraine

Robbed of Joy as Strikes Rattle City, Teens Laugh To Keep From Weeping

From Page A1

2014, was again afflicted by war after the full-scale invasion last year. Frontlines drew close, and artillery strikes began to pound the city. It is seen as a likely next target if Russia captures Bakhmut, its neighbor to the east.

And yet many teenagers remain despite the danger, their parents held to the city by jobs or a reluctance to abandon their homes and live as refugees. The youths' last day in a school classroom was Feb. 23, 2022, the day

During blasts, friends fall down and make jokes. 'We need to be positive,' one says.

before Russia invaded. The authorities canceled all organized activities for young people, lest a rocket hit a gathering.

Russia bombards Sloviansk about once a week, possibly aiming for the thousands of soldiers garrisoned here. Residents are regularly killed by the ones and twos, though a strike last month killed 11 civilians as they slept.

When explosions echo through the streets, the teenagers fall to the ground for safety, lest a strike land close and send shrapnel whistling toward them.

Then the horsing around starts.

"Just don't hit us!" they joke, covering their heads with their hands, said Kristina, 15, one of the teenagers on the stroll about town.

"It's just easier to handle this way," she said. In fact, she admitted, "it's really scary."

Denys, nicknamed the Guitarist for his music skills, said he sometimes got up after a strike and did a little dance, to lighten the mood.

"We fall on the ground and then laugh," said Daniil, 16, another member of the group. "We need to be positive."

The hollow, distant booms of artillery along the front wafted through the city. Daniil laughed. "We are walking under explosions," he said. "Here we go! For us, this is typical."

On the city's central square, an expanse of asphalt rimmed by hedges and flower beds, the teenagers coalesce into ephemeral cohorts that linger for a few minutes and then evaporate, as friends go their separate ways.

"Why didn't he want to walk with us?" one girl said as she walked away. "We are the same age. Oh, he can go to hell."

Mykyta, who has gray-green eyes and shoulder-length brown hair, has not been in a classroom for more than a year. He wants to be a chef, he said, and enjoys making meals for his mother, who is an employee of the state railroad company and is raising him alone.

He hopes the war will be over by the time he graduates next year, after finishing online classes from teachers who sometimes provide instruction from abroad. Then he may move away, he said.

But Mykyta also said he has affection for the city, even after living through the months of war. "There's nothing here," he said. "But I don't want to leave."

The friends don't talk much about the war, he said, or the battle over Bakhmut that might at any day determine the fate of their own city. "There are themes that are much more interesting than war," he said, such as movies and music.



MAURICIO LIMA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

From left, David, Daniil, Rostyslav, Kristina, Mykyta and Denys at a soccer stadium. Russia bombards Sloviansk about once a week.

The Russian invasion changed everything. The normal angst of teenage years, and the first ventures of independence, it all now takes place amid the ruins of a mostly deserted city. With danger ever-present, the 9 p.m. curfews are enforced not by parents, but by soldiers at checkpoints.

Parents are desensitized to the air raid sirens, and in any case feel they have no option but to let their children out for walks after endless time indoors. War has not cured ennui.

The teenagers stopped at a favorite hangout, the steps of a shuttered movie theater near a park where the lawn was pocked with shell craters. They gravitated to the empty bleachers of a soccer stadium, where no games are held lest a crowd form, inviting a more tragic outcome from a single rocket strike.

"There used to be more people, more shops, more cafes, concerts, cool holidays," lamented Daria, 15, sitting in the bleachers, looking at the empty field.

"I miss my city without damage," Denys said. "I miss my calm life. I miss security."

They laugh, he said, but without joy.

"What else can we do, cry?" said Daniil.

After months of practice, he said, he can very accurately gauge from the boom the distance to a strike.

Before the war, Daniil said, he used to attend barbecues outside town, and he looked forward to a municipal holiday in the fall — now canceled — called City Day. He used to spend time with a far larger group of friends, he said, about 20 in all, but now only five or six remain. All the others have left the city.

Sonia, 14, whose mother owns a beauty salon in Sloviansk, said she misses the time before the invasion. "There was no need to be scared for my life," she said.

She misses friends whose families left, seeking safety. "I get attached to people very fast," she said, "and it's very painful to let them go."

"Once I went for a walk with my friend and the shelling started," Sonia said. "I was in a panic and started stopping passing cars and crying and asking them to bring me back to the center of the city. Basically, if there are many bombs falling then it's scary, but if just one then it's fine."

One strike in particular rattled Rostyslav, 15. He was playing a video game in his room at about 1 a.m. when a nearby explosion shook the building. "My parents told me to be ready to leave, if needed."

"I try to prepare myself for it," he said of the Russian attacks. "I live halfway between normal and this situation."

After passing the flooded missile crater, Denys spotted a bed of tulips in a front yard. He picked one, walked up to a group of girls and gave one of them a bloom. "You are very cute," he said.

Maria Varenikova contributed reporting.

Ukraine's Desire for F-16s: Strengthening Air Defense

By LARA JAKES

British and Dutch plans to help Ukraine obtain F-16 fighter jets have put the United States and some of its closest European allies at odds — yet again — over what weapons the West should send Kyiv to defend against Russia's invasion.

Even if the Biden administration overcomes its long-held reluctance to give Ukraine the American-made planes, the F-16 would not be used in combat for months at the earliest, officials and military analysts say. But with no end to the war in sight, the F-16 has become the latest advanced weapon that Ukraine and some of its backers say it needs to stave off Russia — both in the current conflict and for years to come.

Here is a look at the F-16, why Ukraine wants it and why the Biden administration is hesitant to supply it.

First flown in 1976, the F-16 "Fighting Falcon" is a supersonic fighter jet used by militaries in 25 countries for air-to-air combat and air-to-ground strikes. It has flown in American conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, the Persian Gulf and on homeland defense missions in U.S. airspace.

The F-16 is built by the American defense contractor Lockheed Martin and manufacturers in Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway — four countries that a senior Ukrainian official says have quietly signaled they are willing to transfer some of their F-16s to Kyiv.

It is widely considered versatile, lightweight and cost-effective — with a price tag of up to $63 million, depending on the model, according to some estimates. There are approximately 3,000 currently in active military service worldwide, including hundreds in the U.S. Air Force and Navy.

Why does Ukraine want F-16s so much?

The F-16 has both offensive and defensive capabilities. In the short term, Ukrainian officials say, F-16s and other advanced Western fighter jets are needed to enhance air defenses, with Kyiv's existing ground-launched systems being exhausted by frequent barrages of Russian missiles. The jets can be launched within minutes and equipped to shoot down incoming missiles and enemy aircraft.

Without modern fighter jets, "no air defense system will be perfect," President Volodymyr Zelensky told European leaders gathered at a summit in Reykjavik, Iceland, this week.

Beyond the current conflict, many officials across Europe and in the United States believe the F-16 could be a key deterrent to future aggression against Ukraine by Russia's vastly superior air force.

Why is the U.S. so reluctant to send them?

Training Ukraine's pilots to fly Western jets will take months, and the Biden administration says it is better to send weapons that will help Ukraine in its coming counteroffensive against Russia — a battle that many in the West hope will be a turning point in the war. A senior American official said this week that the cost of sending F-16s would absorb much of an already dwindling pot of U.S. war funding.

At a House hearing last month, Celeste A. Wallander, an assistant secretary of defense, said that the administration was focused on Ukraine's military needs but also on what was practical. "What do they require right now, which is what we've been focused on for the battles they are facing," she said. "What can we deliver that will be timely and effective?"

She said that modern Western jet fighters, like F-16s, were "about eighth on the list" of priorities.

What are the chances that Ukraine will ultimately get F-16s?

Probably fair to high, according to officials and military analysts. The Biden administration has previously said no to several types of advanced weapons for Ukraine — including HIMARS missile launchers, Abrams tanks and Patriot missiles — only to reverse itself under pressure from European allies and Congress.

Under what analysts describe as the mostly likely scenario, the United States would issue re-export licenses to other countries that have F-16s, allowing them to transfer their jets to Ukraine. Given the costs of each jet, it is less likely that the United States would send its own F-16s to Ukraine, though it is not impossible.

If Western allies intend to upgrade Ukraine's aged Soviet-era air fleet with more modern jets, giving the country F-16s is "the most likely outcome," said Douglas Barrie, a military aerospace expert at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London.

He also said it would be unlikely for Britain, with its "special relationship" with America, to push ahead with trying to provide F-16s if the Biden administration was not at least somewhat on board. "It would be surprising, to put it mildly," he said.

G7's Price Cap on Russian Oil Seems to Have Worked

By JIM TANKERSLEY

TOKYO — In early June, at the behest of the Biden administration, German leaders assembled top economic officials from the Group of 7 nations for a video conference with the goal of striking a major financial blow to Russia.

The Americans had been trying, in a series of one-off conversations last year, to sound out their counterparts in Europe, Canada and Japan on an unusual and untested idea. Administration officials wanted to try to cap the price that Moscow could command for every barrel of oil it sold on the world market. Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen had floated the plan a few weeks earlier at a meeting of finance ministers in Bonn, Germany.

The reception had been mixed, in part because other countries were not sure how serious the administration was about proceeding. But the call in early June left no doubt: American officials said they were committed to the oil price cap idea and urged everyone else to get on board. At the end of the month, the Group of 7 leaders signed on to the concept.

As the Group of 7 prepares to meet again in this week in Hiroshima, Japan, official and market data suggest the untried idea has helped achieve its twin initial goals since the price cap took effect in December. The cap appears to be forcing Russia to sell its oil for less than other major producers, when crude prices are down significantly from their levels immediately after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Data from Russia and international agencies suggest Moscow's revenues have dropped, forcing budget choices that administration officials say could be starting to hamper its war effort. Drivers in America and elsewhere are paying far less at the gasoline pump than some analysts feared.

Russia's oil revenues in March were down 43 percent from a year earlier, the International Energy Agency reported last month, even though its total export sales volume had grown. This week, the agency reported that Russian revenues had rebounded slightly but were still down 27 percent from a year ago. The government's tax receipts from the oil and gas sectors were down by nearly two-thirds from a year ago.

Russian officials have been forced to change how they tax oil production in an apparent bid to make up for some of the lost revenues. They also appear to be spending government money to try to start building their own network of ships, insurance companies and other essentials of the oil trade, an effort that European and



KENNY HOLSTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Biden at a working lunch with other G7 leaders in Germany in 2022. They're meeting again this week in Japan.

American officials say is a clear sign of success.

"The Russian price cap is working, and working extremely well," Wally Adeyemo, the deputy Treasury secretary, said in an interview. "The money that they're spending on building up this ecosystem to support their energy trade is money they can't spend on building missiles or buying tanks. And what we're going to continue to do is force Russia to have these types of hard choices."

Some analysts doubt the plan is working nearly as well as administration officials claim, at least when it comes to revenues. They say the most frequently cited data on the prices that Russia receives for its exported oil is unreliable. And they say other data, like customs reports from India, suggests Russian officials may be employing elaborate deception measures to evade the cap and sell crude at prices well above its limit.

"I'm concerned the Biden administration's desperation to claim victory with the price cap is preventing them from actually acknowledging what isn't working and taking the steps that might actually help them win," said Steve Cicala, an energy economist at Tufts University who has written about potential evasion under the cap.

The price cap was invented as an escape hatch to the financial penalties that the United States, Europe and others announced on Russian oil exports in the immediate aftermath of the invasion. Those penalties included bans preventing wealthy democracies from buying Russian oil on the world market. But early in the war, they essentially backfired. They drove up the cost of all oil globally, regardless of where it was produced. The higher prices delivered record exports revenues to Moscow, while driving American gasoline prices above $5 a gallon and contributing to President Biden's sagging approval rating.

A new round of European sanctions was set to hit Russian oil hard in December. Economists on Wall Street and in the Biden administration warned those penalties could knock oil off the market, sending prices soaring again. So administration officials decided to try to leverage the West's dominance of the oil shipping trade — including how it is transported and financed — and force a hard bargain on Russia.

Under the plan, Russia could keep selling oil, but if it wanted access to the West's shipping infrastructure, it had to sell at a sharp discount. In December, European leaders agreed to set the cap at $60 a barrel. They followed with other caps for different types of petroleum products, like diesel.

Many analysts were skeptical it could work. A cap that was too punitive had the potential to encourage Russia to severely restrict how much oil it pumps and sells. Such a move could drive crude prices skyward. Alternatively, a cap that was too permissive might have failed to affect Russian oil sales and revenues at all.

Neither scenario has happened. Russia announced a modest production cut this spring but has mostly kept producing at about the same levels it did when the war began.

Fatih Birol, the executive director of the International Energy Agency, has called the price cap an important "safety valve" and a crucial policy that has forced Russia to sell oil for far less than international benchmark prices. Russian oil now trades for $25 to $35 a barrel less than other oil on the global market, Treasury Department officials estimate.

"Russia played the energy card, and it didn't win," Mr. Birol wrote in a February report. "Given that energy is the backbone of Russia's economy, it's not surprising that its difficulties in this area are leading to wider problems. Its budget deficit is skyrocketing as military spending and subsidies to its population largely exceed its export income."

Biden administration officials say that there is no evidence of widespread evasion by Russia, and that Mr. Cicala's analysis of Indian customs reports does not account for the rising cost of transporting Russian oil to India, which is embedded in the customs data.

A White House official told reporters traveling with Mr. Biden in Hiroshima on Thursday that the Group of 7 leaders would adopt new measures meant to counter price-cap evasion in their meeting this weekend.

There is no dispute that the world has avoided what was privately the largest concern for Biden officials last summer: another round of skyrocketing oil prices.

American drivers were paying about $3.54 a gallon on average for gasoline on Monday. That was down nearly $1 from a year ago, and it is nowhere near the $7 a gallon some administration officials feared if the cap had failed to prevent a second oil shock from the Russian invasion. Gas prices are a mild source of relief for Mr. Biden as high inflation continues to hamper his approval among voters.

After rising sharply in the months surrounding the Russian invasion, global oil prices have fallen back to late-2021 levels. The plunge is partly driven by economic cooling around the world, and it has persisted even as large producers like Saudi Arabia have curtailed production.

Falling global prices have contributed to Russia's falling revenues, but they are not the whole story. Reported sales prices for exported Russian oil, known as Urals, have dropped by twice as much as the global price for Brent crude.

The Group of 7 leaders meeting in Japan this week will probably not spend much time on the cap, instead turning to other collective efforts to constrict Russia's economy and revenues. And the biggest winners from the cap decision will not be at the summit.

"The direct beneficiaries are mostly emerging market and lower-income countries that import oil from Russia," Treasury officials noted in a recent report.

The officials were referring to a handful of countries outside the Group of 7 — particularly India and China — that have used the cap as leverage to pay a discount for Russian oil. Neither India nor China joined the formal cap effort, but it is their oil consumers who are seeing the lowest prices from it.

War In Ukraine

As Russia Fires Missiles at Kyiv, a Blast Derails a Freight Train in Crimea

By ANDREW E. KRAMER and MATTHEW MPOKE BIGG

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine's air defenses shot down dozens of Russian missiles in the skies above Kyiv early Thursday, casting flaming debris over the Ukrainian capital on the same day that an explosion derailed a Russian freight train in Crimea, the latest in a series of blasts in Russian-occupied territory.

Russia's railway operator said that "unauthorized persons" were behind the derailment, suggesting an act of sabotage. The Ukrainian authorities, who often do not confirm or deny responsibility for incidents in Crimea or Russia, did not claim any role in the derailment.

The missile attack and the explosion in Crimea come as both Russia and Ukraine are preparing for a widely expected Ukrainian offensive aiming to retake occupied land. In anticipation of that campaign, Russia has fired volley after volley of missiles — Thursday was the ninth attack on Kyiv this month — in a long-range effort to demoralize civilians and keep Ukraine's air defenses tied up away from the front.

And the explosion in Crimea fit a pattern of strikes on Russian railways, supply lines, fuel depots and ammunition stores that analysts call a Ukrainian push to handicap Russia's war machine and sow instability ahead of the offensive.


VALENTYN OGIRENKO/REUTERS

A police officer in Kyiv inspecting the debris of a Russian missile after it was shot down by Ukraine's air defenses on Thursday.

Ukraine's air defenses intercepted 29 of 30 missiles fired at Ukraine overnight, the country's military said on Thursday. Debris from one destroyed missile caused a fire in a Kyiv neighborhood, but there were no injuries, according to Serhiy Popko, the city's military administrator.

"A series of air attacks on Kyiv, unprecedented in its power, intensity and variety, continues," Mr. Popko said on Telegram.

The missile that slipped through Ukraine's defenses struck an industrial infrastructure site in the southern port of Odesa, city officials said. One civilian was killed and two others were injured, according to the Ukrainian military's southern command.

Kyiv in particular has been subject to attack after attack in recent weeks. Russian and U.S. officials had said this week that a Patriot missile system, shielding the city from ballistic missiles, had been damaged in an earlier barrage. But U.S. officials said the system remained operational.

Ukraine has sought to pressure Russian forces both in contested regions — making recent gains in the grueling battle for the city of Bakhmut — and far from the front lines. The Russian authorities and their proxies have reported a series of explosions and attacks in recent weeks, including a series of railway blasts.

The derailment in Crimea on Thursday caused no injuries but interrupted rail service between two cities, Simferopol and Sevastopol, according to Sergei Aksyonov, the Russian-installed governor. The Russian state news agency RIA Novosti said eight cars derailed, citing a Crimean transport minister.

Video verified by The New York Times showed that the train derailed on the outskirts of Simferopol. It was not immediately clear whether the train was moving at the time.

Crimea plays an important role in supplying Russian troops in occupied territories and holds enormous symbolic value to the government of President Vladimir V. Putin, who seized the peninsula in 2014 and has described it as a centerpiece of Russia's national restoration.

Ukrainian officials have vowed to retake the peninsula, and it has been subject to attacks since Russia's full-scale invasion began last year, including an explosion that badly damaged the bridge linking Crimea to Russia.

Without taking responsibility, Ukrainian officials have described blasts at Russian infrastructure sites as affecting Russia's ability to fight — and to prepare for the offensive.

"On those tracks, in particular, weapons, ammunition, armored vehicles and other means used for the war of aggression against Ukraine are transported," Andriy Yusov, a spokesman for Ukraine's military intelligence agency, said on Ukrainian television on Thursday. "It is quite natural that these tracks did not hold up, got tired and now are not functioning for a while."

But analysts said that although railways are a critical artery for Russia's war logistics, individual strikes on them have had limited effects.

"The railroad track was always restored in at most a day, and the day after an explosion, trains were already running as usual," said Ruslan Leviev, an analyst with the Conflict Intelligence Team, an investigative group. "This is more of a gain in a moral sense, in the spirit of, 'Look, we can blow up targets deep in Russian territory.'"

And military experts caution that it is too soon to say whether Ukraine will sustain the apparent attacks, or to assess how effective they have been.

"Whether the attacks will reach sufficient effect to contest Russian operations — we have yet to see," said Mathieu Boulegue, a Russia expert at Chatham House, a London-based research group. "It's all about whether it starts to have a systemic effect."

In recent weeks, pro-Russian officials have also accused Ukraine of launching drone strikes on the peninsula. In one example, a drone attack on a fuel depot in Sevastopol, the home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet, set off an enormous fire in late April.

There have also been attacks on targets in Russian regions close to Ukraine's border. On Telegram on Thursday, the governor of Russia's Belgorod region asserted that Ukrainian forces had killed two civilians — he did not say how — in a village near the border. Two trains were derailed this month in the Bryansk region, according to local officials.

In several cases, Ukrainian officials have publicly celebrated the incidents. In April, for instance, Mr. Yusov, the intelligence official, said the fuel depot fire in Crimea "was blazing nicely and many Ukrainians and good people in the world enjoyed it."

Victoria Kim, Anton Troianovski and Haley Willis contributed reporting.

Chief Justice of Ukraine Faces Charges In Corruption Case as Inquiry Expands

By CARLOTTA GALL

KYIV, Ukraine — The chief of Ukraine's Supreme Court was formally arrested Thursday, as prosecutors indicated in a second day of hearings that a high-level corruption case was expanding to include a wider circle of judges.

Prosecutors also accused a lawyer of acting as an intermediary in paying a bribe to the chief justice, and said that at least three other judges of the court had been found holding thousands of dollars in currency marked by investigators.

The chief justice, Vsevolod Knyazev, was apprehended just after midnight Tuesday by officers of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, who searched his home and office in simultaneous raids and said they found large sums of cash in U.S. currency.

In videos of court hearings Wednesday and Thursday, posted on the High Anti-Corruption Court's YouTube channel, Mr. Knyazev appeared in the courtroom wearing a bright blue sweater and flanked by his lawyers. The High Council of Justice on Thursday lifted his immunity from prosecution, opening the way for his formal arrest.

Mr. Knyazev has been charged with graft in a public office, and accused of accepting a bribe of $1.8 million to influence a case in favor of a Ukrainian oligarch, Kostyantyn Zhevago. A prosecutor said Mr. Knyazev had sent a message to the lawyer in early May to split the money into at least 14 separate bags, and later sent a message saying he had passed the money to other judges.

The Anti-Corruption Court's prosecutor, Oleksandr Omelchenko, told the court that officers had tracked the payment of the first tranche of the bribe on May 3, and raided Mr. Knyazev's home half an hour after a second tranche was handed over on Monday evening.

The anti-corruption bureau had infiltrated the group making the bribe and marked the notes used in the payment. Officers discovered $1.8 million in cash at Mr. Knyazev's home and office, but the prosecutor said that not all the bribe money, totaling $2.7 million, had been recovered.

At least three other Supreme Court judges are under scrutiny.

Mr. Zhevago, currently in France, has been fighting extradition to Ukraine, where he faced charges of embezzlement and money laundering in a separate case. He has denied involvement in the bribery case.

Oleh Horestkyi, the lawyer acting for the oligarch, was apprehended with Mr. Knyazev in the act of handing over part of the bribe on Tuesday. He was detained for 60 days by the court, the special anti-corruption prosecutor said in a statement.

The case has shocked and dismayed members of Ukraine's judiciary. Two Supreme Court judges in interviews lamented the damage to the reputation of the court and the judiciary. They said they worked through the night and most of Tuesday to prepare a ballot in which 140 of the 142 Supreme Court judges voted to remove Mr. Knyazev from his post. The two judges spoke on condition of anonymity, because of their position as members of the court.

With continued Western aid as well as eventual membership in the European Union and NATO at stake, President Volodymyr Zelensky has made a show of cracking down on Ukraine's endemic corruption. In January, numerous officials were dismissed, including a deputy minister in the presidential office who was accused of participating in a $400,000 bribe.

But members of anti-corruption organizations welcomed the investigation as a sign that Ukraine's anti-corruption law enforcement was proving its resilience even during a war.

"I am happy that this happened because it shows that these institutions are independent and they can bring anybody to justice," said Andriy Borovyk, executive director of Transparency International Ukraine.

The Supreme Court judges' swift removal of Mr. Knyazev was also a sign of accountability, said Vitalii Shabunin, director of the board of the Anti-Corruption Action Center, a nonprofit.

"The good news is that the institution by itself is ready to resolve the problem," he said.

The bureau said in a statement that the bribe was made on behalf of Mr. Zhevago in a dispute over the ownership of 40 percent of the shares of the Poltava Mining and Processing Plant, Ferrexpo. The court decided the case in the oligarch's favor in April 2023, it said.


ALINA SMUTKO/REUTERS


PIERRE ALBOUY/REUTERS

Vsevolod Knyazev, above center, is accused of accepting a $1.8 million bribe to influence a case involving the oligarch Kostyantyn Zhevago, right.

Mr. Shabunin said that the prosecution of such a high-level case was proof that the anti-corruption institutions established since Ukraine's "revolution of dignity" in 2014 were working properly. Recent appointments to the bodies had been conducted fairly and transparently, he said.

But he said other institutions were dragging their feet. In particular, he said, Ukraine's Parliament should reinstate the system of declaration of assets by public officials, as the International Monetary Fund has demanded. The law was suspended last year after Russia invaded.

The government of Mr. Zelensky, who was elected in 2019 on promises to curb corruption, has had some success but also setbacks, Mr. Borovyk said.

"During Zelensky we were always one step forward, one step back," he said. "In general there were good times and not so good times."

But he said leaders are feeling strong pressure from Ukrainian citizens, who have ranked the fight against corruption as second in importance only to bringing Russia to justice for the war.

Oleksandr Chubko and Dyma Shapoval contributed reporting.

U.S. Accounting Revision Frees Up Billions

*This article is by **Karoun Demirjian**, **Edward Wong** and **Eric Schmitt**.*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has significantly reduced its estimate of the value of weapons it has sent to Ukraine, freeing up at least $3 billion to keep Ukrainian troops supplied in their war against Russia over the next several months.

The Biden administration has faced intensifying pressure to explain how it intended to continue supporting Ukraine without asking Congress to replenish its budget. On Thursday, Pentagon and State Department officials told congressional staff members that they had discovered an accounting issue that could make more resources available before Ukraine's planned counteroffensive this summer.

Pentagon officials realized their mistake almost two months ago, according to a senior White House official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss accounting processes.

But instead of placating Congress's concerns, the revelation was met with frustration and anger, as some lawmakers criticized the Biden administration for what they said was an extremely troublesome error.

"These funds could have been used for extra supplies and weapons for the upcoming counteroffensive, instead of rationing funds to last for the remainder of the fiscal year," Representatives Michael McCaul of Texas, chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, and Mike D. Rogers of Alabama, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said in a joint statement. They called on the administration to "make up for this precious lost time" by sending Ukraine long-range missile and cluster munitions, which it has resisted doing.

Administration officials said their mistake was one of improper valuation, explaining that they had been calculating the price of each item based on how much it would cost to replace it with new equipment, instead of its sale value, which is lower. They plan to make the same change in an assessment of their remaining authority to send Taiwan weapons from existing Pentagon stocks, according to administration and congressional officials.

"This overvaluation has not constrained our support to Ukraine nor impacted our ability to flow capabilities to the battlefield," Sabrina Singh, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said in a statement.

Congressional staff members expressed that it had taken the administration 15 months of war to identify such a basic and yet pivotal accounting mistake. Some said they thought that the revision might be a way for officials to maintain supplies at a time when available funds for Ukraine were in danger of running out.

But they added that they had not yet determined whether the adjustment would result in a windfall of additional weaponry for Ukraine.

Lawmakers from both parties have repeatedly asked the administration how it intended to stretch its dwindling budget authority to supply Ukraine with weapons quickly — called presidential drawdown authority — without handicapping Kyiv's efforts to mount a decisive counteroffensive against Russia this summer.

"I'm worried that it's going to leave a gap," Senator Susan Collins of Maine, the top Republican on the Senate Appropriations Committee, said in an interview Wednesday, before staff members were told about the accounting revision. "I am concerned that the administration has not been forthcoming on how much more money they need, and at what period will the funds that we've appropriated run out."

"They need to have the munitions they need and the capabilities that they need, and I think we need this big push this summer, to punch Putin in the mouth a few more times," said Representative Elissa Slotkin, a Democrat from Michigan and a former C.I.A., State Department and Pentagon official who is on the House's Armed Services Committee.

Presidential drawdown authority allows the administration to pull from existing weapons stocks, instead of waiting the several months or years it can take for defense contractors to manufacture weapons under new contracts. The Biden administration has highlighted the program as one of its signature achievements in helping Ukraine battle Russian forces.


BRENDAN HOFFMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A delivery of U.S. equipment and defensive munitions arriving in Kyiv a month before Russia invaded last year.

Under drawdown authority, the administration decides which weapons to send out from existing stocks and how to determine their value. Since the start of the conflict, the Pentagon has announced a new drawdown package about every two weeks, with each valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

But according to the administration's own calculations, its coffers had been running low. Congress approved $14.5 billion in drawdown authority to last through the fiscal year, which ends on September 30. As of Wednesday, according to congressional aides, only $2.7 billion of that was left. That is not enough, they said, to sustain the current pace and size of military aid packages without running out of funds by July or August.

Several Democratic and Republican staff members said that State Department and Pentagon officials had sympathized with their concerns in private briefings, including during one last week.

The White House, the staff members added, had staunchly resisted the idea of approaching Congress to augment those authorities before the end of the fiscal year. According to some congressional aides, White House officials said Ukraine had stockpiled enough equipment from previous military assistance packages to mount a long-awaited counteroffensive against Russian positions. Some lawmakers said in interviews that they were told by administration officials that if Ukraine experienced a shortfall nonetheless, European suppliers like Germany would be able to bridge it with extra military donations.

But many senior congressional aides responsible for overseeing the Ukraine military assistance programs, in both parties, remained unconvinced by those arguments. Several of them speculated this week that the Biden administration was resisting making an appeal for more funds and drawdown authority because of concerns that it would be awkward to approach Congress while negotiating a deal on the debt ceiling, in which Democrats are trying to preserve nondefense discretionary spending that Republicans are threatening to cut.

The senior White House official said colleagues wanted to see how Ukraine's counteroffensive progressed before determining what other weapons it needed and how to request congressional permission for aid to support that.

Mr. Biden and his top aides have said they would support Ukraine until it won the war. But the administration has not yet requested new drawdown authority or additional funds for Ukraine to be included in the budget for next fiscal year, which begins on October 1. Congressional aides worry that the delayed start to that discussion could complicate lawmakers' ability to pass legislation authorizing new security assistance — and, by extension, that could jeopardize Ukraine's ability to prevail.

John Ismay contributed reporting.

A Royal Paradox: Harry and Meghan Seek Privacy as Well as Publicity

By MARK LANDLER

When Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, decamped Britain for the United States in 2020, he portrayed it as an act of survival against a relentlessly intrusive British press. On Tuesday, after a chaotic encounter with photographers in New York City, Harry found the media glare can be just as intense in his adopted home.

With details continuing to filter out about what exactly happened to Harry, Meghan and her mother, Doria Ragland, as photographers pursued them in Midtown Manhattan, the episode underscored a basic paradox in the lives of this celebrity couple: they plead for privacy, but also seek publicity, with a Netflix documentary, a tell-all memoir by Harry and public appearances that will inevitably draw cameras.

The frenzy in New York is a reminder of the grievances that Harry has held for decades against the British press, which remains the primary market for paparazzi shots of him and Meghan. In 1997, his mother, Princess Diana, died in a car crash in Paris while fleeing photographers; Harry has blamed them for her death and expressed fears that history could repeat itself with his wife and family.

But the episode also illustrates a dilemma for Harry: Even the involvement of the New York Police Department did not spare his family being swarmed by paparazzi, who pursued them even after they took refuge in a police station.

The role of the police in Tuesday's incident is drawing attention in London because Harry has filed a legal challenge against Britain's Home Office, after it rejected his request for the Metropolitan Police to provide protection to him and his family when they visit Britain.

"The example of what happened in New York suggests that the kind of police protection Harry wants in London is not going to be enough to protect him or his family," said Ed Owens, a historian who has studied relations between the monarchy and the media. "He's not engaging with this reality."

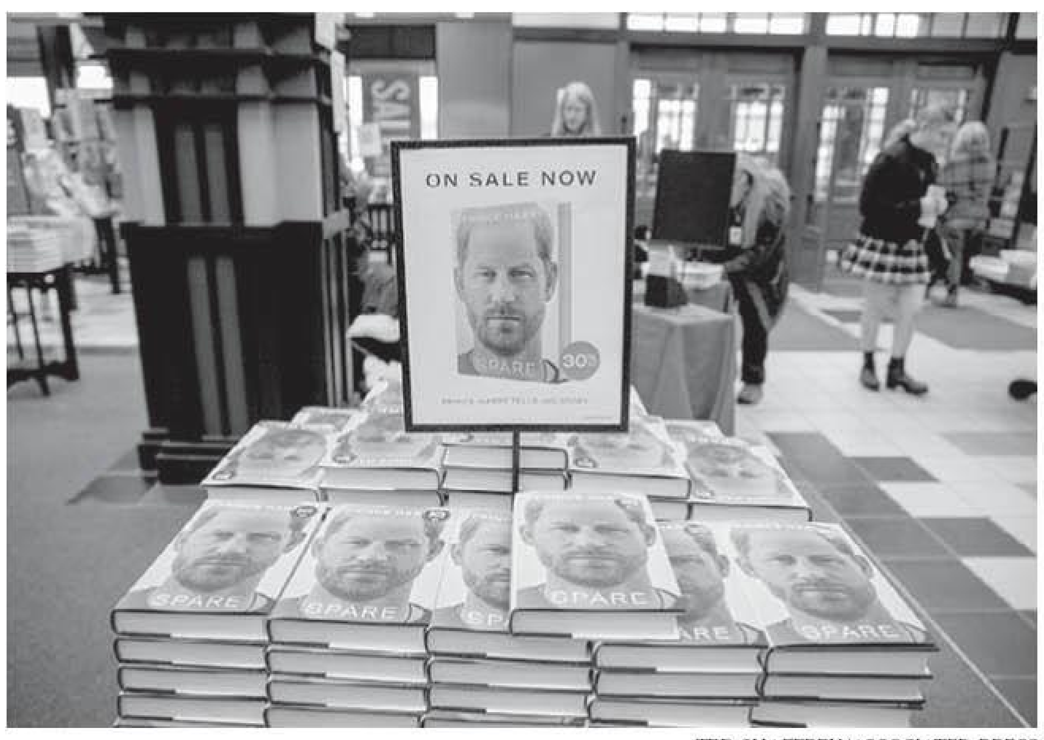
In California, where they now live, Harry and Meghan employ private security guards who are licensed to carry guns. But they are not allowed to travel with armed guards in Britain, which is one reason Harry has asked for police protection, and has offered to pay for it himself. Lawyers for the Home Office argued in court that police officers should not be hired out to paying customers.

Maria Cramer contributed reporting from New York.



KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES FOR MS. FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN

Prince Harry, with his wife, Meghan, and her mother, Doria Ragland. People who know the couple say security costs have led the couple to strike deals like publishing Harry's memoir, "Spare."



TED SHAFFREY/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Harry has described the loss of his security detail as one of the most worrisome consequences of his bitter split from his family and his withdrawal from royal duties. In his memoir, "Spare," he wrote that from childhood, he had never traveled without three armed bodyguards. During negotiations with palace officials over his new status, Harry said, he begged for the bodyguards to be left in place, even if he lost all the other royal perks.

"I offered to defray the cost of security out of my own pocket," he wrote. "I wasn't sure how I'd do that, but I'd find a way."

The burden of paying for round-the-clock security, say people who know the couple, is one of the reasons Harry and Meghan have struck lucrative publishing and programming deals with Netflix and Penguin Random House.

In a statement on Wednesday, the couple's spokeswoman suggested that the threat posed by the photographers was as much to pedestrians, other motorists, and police officers as to the couple or Ms. Ragland. It described "a near catastrophic car chase at the hands of a ring of highly aggressive paparazzi."

That is more dramatic than the account given by the New York police as well as the taxi driver who picked up the couple and Ms. Ragland.

The driver, Sukhcharn Singh, said he would not characterize it as a chase and added that he was not afraid, though his passengers clearly were. A police spokesman acknowledged that the photographers posed a challenge, but said the three arrived at their destination on the Upper East Side without "reported collisions, summonses, injuries, or arrests."

The New York Police Department declined to comment on security deployment for high-profile visitors to the city. But an official with knowledge of the process said the police do their own independent research and analysis of such visits, before deciding whether to provide additional security.

News coverage of the encounter, which was extravagant on both sides of the Atlantic, pointed out the discrepancies in the accounts of the episode. But on this occasion, the New York tabloids made more of it than their London counterparts, which ran front-page photos of the couple but not judgmental headlines.

The New York Post's front-page banner said "Duke (and Duchess) of Hazard," while The Daily News said, "Scary Echo of Diana."

Harry has lawsuits pending against the publishers of three London tabloids, The Daily Mail, The Daily Mirror, and The Sun, which he accuses of invading his privacy by hacking his cellphone and other illicit methods. Meghan won a case against the publisher of the Mail on Sunday for publishing a private letter she sent to her estranged father, Thomas Markle, at the time of her wedding.

> Neither leaving Britain nor having a police escort shields them from paparazzi.

In one of Harry's cases, against Rupert Murdoch's British newspaper group, Harry said the company paid a "huge sum of money" in 2020 to settle claims that its journalists hacked the cellphone of his older brother, Prince William. The company and Kensington Palace, William's office, declined to comment.

The evidence of systematic hacking of the phones of celebrities, royals and others led to the Leveson Inquiry, a judicial inquest that resulted in publishers ending the practice of phone hacking. They also curbed the aggressiveness of photographers who follow celebrities and members of the royal family.

While paparazzi have shown a degree of restraint since being publicly shamed in Britain, they still have a fairly free hand in the United States, where they have faced less of a backlash against their methods.

Mr. Owens, the historian, said the British press accepted these measures because they worried that if they did not, the government would impose compulsory curbs. For the royal family, that set off a period of relative calm with the press that only ended when Harry began dating an American actress named Meghan Markle.

"The royal family's lives should have gotten easier in the U.K.," after press coverage calmed, Mr. Owens said. "At the same time, the toxicity of the relationship between the royal family and the media has continued. There has been both a softening of the press's approach and a more aggressive approach by the family to how they are covered."

In the Netflix documentary, "Harry & Meghan," the couple are depicted peering nervously out the windows of their S.U.V. for photographers pursuing them, as they leave a parking garage and head to an event. The scene is set in Manhattan.



DAVID R. MARTIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sukhcharn Singh, the New York City cabdriver, said his passengers were afraid during the pursuit.

England's Water Companies Vow to Modernize Sewers

By ISABELLA KWAI

LONDON — England's rivers and coastlines have long endured a foul problem — an astounding release of untreated sewage by water companies, some of it illegal, which critics say has sickened swimmers and polluted the country's critical ecosystems.

"It's disgusting when you're in the water and you see and smell sewage," said Josh Harris, a spokesman for Surfers Against Sewage, a charity that monitors pollution and is among several groups leading an intensifying public outcry against the contamination of England's waterways.

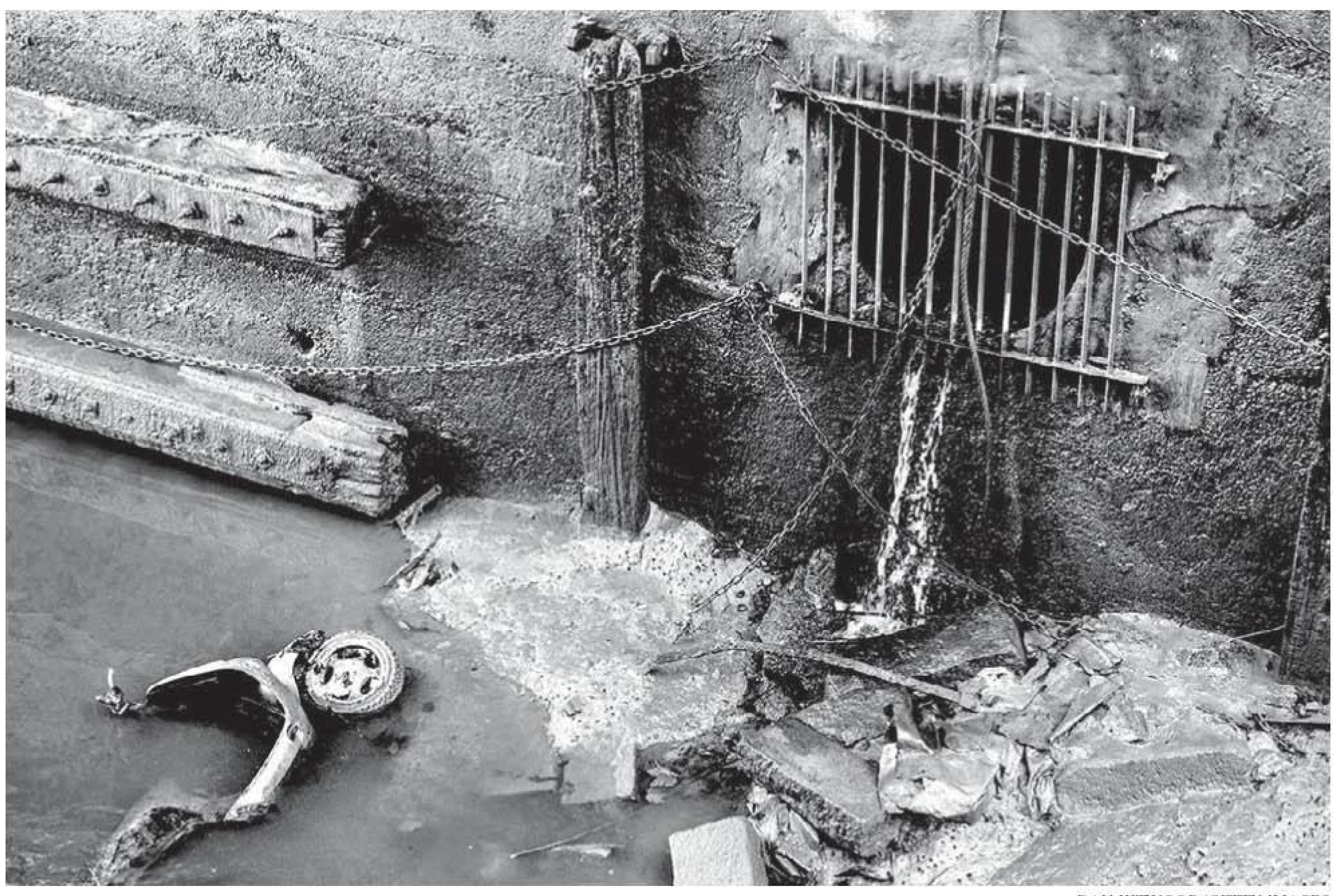
Private water and sewage companies in England admitted on Thursday that they had not done enough to address the outpouring of sewage and announced a plan totaling 10 billion pounds, or about $12.4 billion, to modernize the country's sewers.

Last year alone, the companies sent sewage into rivers and seas for more than 1.75 million hours, amounting to 301,091 spills overall, or an average of 825 a day, according to government data, a slight reduction compared with the previous year largely because of drier weather, not preventive action from water companies, England's Environment Agency said.

"The message from the water and sewage industry today is clear: We are sorry," Ruth Kelly, the chair of Water U.K., a body representing water companies in Britain, said in a news release, adding that companies were listening. "The public is right to be upset about the current quality of our rivers and beaches."

The apology comes after actions in the past year by environmental regulators in England to hold water and sewage companies accountable. The regulators had been under pressure from activists who also accused them of not enacting harsh enough rules or enforcing existing ones around polluting limits.

Companies in England are allowed to dump untreated sewage only in exceptional circumstances, such as during intense storms that strain the Victorian-era infrastructure.



DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

A sewage overflow outlet discharging into the Thames last year, when spills averaged 825 a day.

The government has promised to make changes, including introducing tighter timelines for when companies can release untreated sewage and higher penalties for breaking rules. Since 2015, regulators have brought legal action that has punished water companies with more than 144 million pounds, or about $178 million in fines, and in 2021, the Environment Agency began investigations that have placed more scrutiny on the companies' dumping practices.

Government officials and regulators welcomed Thursday's announcement and said they would work closely with water companies to ensure that they would make improvements. The plan applies only to England, because Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland manage their own sewerage treatments. But residents in those nations have also pressured officials to combat waste spillages.

Though environmental groups and experts called the apology a start, they questioned why water companies had been allowed to dump so much sewage for so long, and why customers would have to pay for the increased investment.

"This is not a show-off moment," said Darren Reynolds, a professor of health and environment at the University of the West of England in Bristol, adding that the apology came after the water industry had repeatedly denied that there was a problem.

> *A $12.4 billion plan may lead to cleaner rivers and beaches.*

"We're talking about meeting a minimum level of competence."

Private water companies, looking to maximize costs for their shareholders, had shirked their responsibility and regulators had failed to effectively do their jobs, he said, partly because of chronic underfunding. Still, the situation represented a systemic failure at a time when the effect of pollution on waterways could have longer-term ramifications for the future ecology.

"It's not just falling asleep at the wheel for a bit," Professor Reynolds said. "We've been actively destroying our water environment."

Even with the apology, it was difficult to trust that the new plan amounted to actual change said Mr. Harris, the spokesman for Surfers Against Sewage, who said the current limits on water companies did not go far enough.

"They've overseen decades of mismanagement of our sewerage network, all the while siphoning off tens of billions to shareholders," he said.

Water U.K. said on Thursday that investors would front the costs first, and that investment would be paid back "in modest increments each year" through water bills. But the country needed a long-term plan to revolutionize its management of water systems, Professor Reynolds said.

"If we're talking about making the world a cleaner and healthier place, this is quite devastating," he said, adding that England was behind the curve in water innovation. "You have to lead by example — and we clearly haven't."

Colombia Unsure About Fate Of 4 Children in Plane Crash

By GENEVIEVE GLATSKY and JACK NICAS

BOGOTÁ, Colombia — For more than two weeks, search-and-rescue teams in Colombia have scoured the Amazon rainforest for four children who were aboard a plane that crashed on May 1. The bodies of the three adults on board were found in the wreckage, but there was no sign of the children.

Then, on Wednesday night, Colombia's president, Gustavo Petro, posted on Twitter what appeared to be remarkable news: The country's armed forces had found the four children, the oldest of whom is 13 and the youngest a baby, alive. "A joy for our country," he said.

But he may have spoken too soon. Quickly, local news reports cited military sources that said the armed forces had not made contact with the children, and the nation's child-welfare agency, the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare, known by its Spanish initials I.C.B.F., then confirmed that in a statement.

"Information was received from the territory assuring contact was made with the four boys and girls," the agency said late Wednesday. "However, the military forces have not yet been able to establish official contact due to adverse weather conditions and difficult terrain."

By Thursday morning, Mr. Petro had deleted his tweet, but then later posted another tweet seeking to explain his actions.

"I have decided to delete the tweet because the information provided by the ICBF could not be confirmed. I regret what happened," he wrote. "The Military Forces and the Indigenous communities will continue in their tireless search to give the country the news it is waiting for. At this moment there is no other priority than to move forward with the search until they are found. The children's lives are the most important thing."

Adding to the confusion, that same morning, Astrid Cáceres, director of the child-welfare agency, said in an interview with local news media that the children were, in fact, "fine" and under the care of an Indigenous community that had helped with the search. "The level of precision in the details really encourages us," Ms. Cáceres said of the initial report that the children had been found. "We are waiting to make contact."

The conflicting information left the nation mystified over the fate of the four Indigenous children — ages 13, 9 and 4 years old, and 11 months — who have been the focus of an jungle search since the Cessna plane they were traveling in crashed in the rainforest.

A spokesperson for the child-welfare agency told The New York Times on Thursday that Ms. Cáceres and the head of the civil aviation authority were traveling to the remote area to investigate.

The discovery of the four children alive would raise a number of questions, including how children so young managed to drink, eat and take care of themselves alone for so many days.

The children, members of the Huitoto Indigenous community, had been traveling with their mother and an Indigenous leader from the tiny Amazon community of Araracuara, Colombia, to San José del Guaviare, a small city in central Colombia along the Guaviare River. The pilot reported engine failure and declared an emergency before disappearing from radar around 7:30 a.m. on May 1.

The Colombian air force and military soon deployed search-and-rescue planes and helicopters, as well as land and river teams. Indigenous communities in the region also joined the effort.

Using a speaker that produces sound loud enough to be heard within a roughly mile-wide radius, they played a recording made by the children's grandmother in Huitoto, their native language.

According to a Colombian news outlet, El Tiempo, the four children and their mother had been traveling to meet their father, who had fled the area after receiving threats from armed insurgents.

Genevieve Glatsky reported from Bogotá, Colombia, and Jack Nicas from Rio de Janeiro.



ROSLAN RAHMAN/AFP — GETTY IMAGES

Singapore carried out another execution this week over a modest amount of marijuana.

Singapore Again Imposes Death Penalty For Marijuana

By JOHN YOON

Singapore has hanged a man for trafficking less than 3.5 pounds of marijuana, its second execution in three weeks for a crime that carries a much lighter sentence in most of the rest of the world.

"Capital punishment is part of Singapore's comprehensive harm prevention strategy which targets both drug demand and supply," the country's Central Narcotics Bureau said in a statement confirming the execution on Wednesday. It gave the man's age, 36, but did not identify him by name, as requested by his family, or detail his offense.

Court documents show that a man named Muhammad Faizal Bin Mohd Shariff was convicted and sentenced to death in 2019 for possessing about 1.6 kilograms, or 3.4 pounds, of cannabis. Last month, Singapore hanged a man who was convicted of conspiring to traffic about two pounds of cannabis.

Human rights groups condemned both punishments as grossly excessive, but Singapore has long taken a harsh stance toward drugs, showing little flexibility.

Of 54 people awaiting execution, 51 are for drug crimes.

Since 1975, the country has mandated the death penalty for people convicted of drug trafficking. In most cases, the death penalty is given for trafficking more than 500 grams of cannabis, 250 grams of methamphetamine, 30 grams of cocaine or 15 grams of heroin, according to the bureau.

Most death row inmates in Singapore are tied to drug crimes. Out of 54 people awaiting execution in Singapore, 51 are for drug-related offenses, said Kirsten Han, a spokeswoman for Transformative Justice Collective, which has campaigned for abolishing the death penalty in Singapore. The remaining three are for murders.

Last year, Singapore executed 11 people for drug-related crimes. Only five other countries did so, Ms. Han said: China, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam.

Before his conviction, Mr. Faizal claimed in court that he had meant to consume most of the cannabis himself, only intending to sell a small portion. On Monday, he filed an appeal seeking a reduced sentence of life imprisonment, but an appeals court denied it the next day. He was hanged 21 days after Singapore executed Tangaraju Suppiah for a similar offense.

While Southeast Asia used to be known for its harsh penalties for drug offenses, countries in the region have in recent years relaxed their stances. Malaysia has ended its mandatory death penalty for drug offenses. Thailand has legalized marijuana.

Death sentences linked to drug offenses in Singapore have prompted protests by human rights groups. In 2021, protesters urged the country to halt the execution of a man convicted of smuggling heroin, arguing he should be spared because he had a mental disability. He was executed in April 2022.

Opponents of Singapore's drug policy also say that it has disproportionately hurt marginalized ethnic minorities. "It is very concerning that 64.9 percent of the death row inmates are of Malay ethnicity," when Malays make up only 14 percent of Singapore's population, wrote M. Ravi, an international human rights lawyer who had represented Mr. Faizal.

The argument to abolish the death penalty for drug crimes has not gained much traction in Singapore.

"The public is still largely prodeath penalty," Ms. Han said, adding that the opposition is hesitant to touch the issue. "It's too much of a hot potato for them."

Israeli Parade Through Jerusalem Pushes Tensions Further

By PATRICK KINGSLEY and HIBA YAZBEK



RONEN ZVULUN/REUTERS



SAID KHATIB/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Israelis with flags near Damascus Gate, the entrance to Jerusalem's Old City, on Thursday; and Palestinians protesting in Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip. The annual celebration marks the unification of the city after Israel captured East Jerusalem in 1967.

Thousands of Israelis marched through Jerusalem on Thursday to celebrate Israel's capture of East Jerusalem in 1967, a contentious annual event, known as Jerusalem Day, that regularly stirs tensions with Palestinians, who see it as a provocation.

Large crowds of Israelis, many of them from ultranationalist groups, walked through the Old City, toward the Western Wall — a remnant of an ancient retaining structure that once surrounded the holiest site in Judaism, the Temple Mount. The parade prompted many Palestinians, who form the overwhelming majority of Old City residents, to shut their shops, in expectation of vandalism and abuse from the marchers.

Israeli officials say the parade is a largely peaceful and festive event marred by only a small minority of participants. But several groups of marchers were filmed making threats to Arabs, and some threw sticks and bottles for several minutes at Arab journalists in full view of the police, injuring at least four journalists, according to medics.

"May I be avenged on Palestine," chanted a group of roughly 40 participants, shortly before the parade was formally scheduled to start. "May its name be erased."

"Death to Arabs," chanted several other, similarly sized groups once the march was underway.

A few yards away, a female marcher shouted at Arab journalists: "This is Jewish country only, we don't need Muslims here."

Anticipating further unrest, the Israeli police said they had assigned 3,500 police officers to secure the parade and other side events. The Israeli military also braced for possible rocket fire from Palestinian militias in Gaza, who have sometimes launched projectiles in response to the march in the past, most notably at the start of the 11-day war in 2021 between Israel and Hamas.

Hundreds of Palestinians held a counter-demonstration along the boundary between the enclave and Israel, prompting Israeli soldiers along the perimeter to fire tear gas at them. At least two Palestinians were injured.

To many Israelis, the day is an important display of sovereignty in an ancient Jewish capital that for nearly 2,000 years lay outside of Jewish control, and which they still feel unable to completely control. For more than a millennium, the Temple Mount has been a Muslim holy site — the Aqsa Mosque compound — and Jews are technically barred from praying there, even if the police informally let them do so.

But to most Palestinians, the march — known as the Flags Parade — is an offensive and unnecessary expression of dominance in an area that they, and most foreign governments, consider occupied territory. Israel captured East Jerusalem, including the Old City, from Jordan during the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, and Palestinians hope it will one day form the capital of a future Palestinian state.

A largely calm event was marred by some marchers who made threats against Arabs.

The anniversary is always tense, but this year the stakes were raised by the unusually prominent involvement of several lawmakers from the government, which is the most ultranationalist and religious in Israel's history.

Several lawmakers from Likud, the party of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, joined small groups of Jews that toured the Aqsa Mosque compound to mark the day, angering Muslims. Yitzhak Wasserlauf, a far-right cabinet minister, and Ayala Ben-Gvir, the wife of the far-right minister for national security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, also visited the site. Mr. Ben-Gvir himself later joined the main procession.

For some hard-line Israelis, these expressions of sovereignty did not go far enough. Some said the thousands of marchers should continue to parade inside the compound, and not just stop at the Western Wall.

"The situation right now — where we have only a wall — is not enough," said Tom Nissani, the leader of a small far-right group, Beyadeinu, that advocates building a new Jewish temple at the heart of the Aqsa compound.

"One day the temple will be back there, on the same spot," Mr. Nissani said, after participating in a small side-protest outside the Old City walls. "That's our right on our land," he added.

The Israeli police took preventive action against some Jewish extremists, barring a handful from entering the Old City, including Mr. Nissani, who stayed outside its walls after his colleagues passed through them.

But to many Palestinians, these felt like token gestures when juxtaposed with the wider context: a nationalist parade through mainly Palestinian neighborhoods that prompted Palestinian shopkeepers to close, stopped Palestinian residents from freely moving through parts of the city, and led some participants to verbally abuse Arab journalists.

"This day pains me," said Zaki Sabbah, a Palestinian seller of bread rolls and snacks in the Old City. "This is a city for Jews, Muslims and Christians. So why don't they close the city on Ramadan or Easter?"

Some Jewish Israelis attempted to set a different tone. A group of leftists, including some foreigners, briefly blocked a road from the occupied West Bank to Jerusalem, unsuccessfully seeking to stop settler groups from attending the parade. Others distributed flowers to Palestinians in the Muslim quarter of the Old City.

Myra Noveck contributed reporting from Jerusalem and Iyad Abuheweila from Gaza City.



Sorting through food at a damaged U.N. World Food Program warehouse. "I just hope we get help before we die," one man said.

Myanmar Cyclone Victims Beg for Supplies to Survive As Junta Stands in the Way



PHOTOGRAPHS BY SAI AUNG MAIN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Cyclone Mocha devastated the area around Sittwe, Myanmar, the site of many Rohingya camps.

By RICHARD C. PADDOCK

Four days after Cyclone Mocha made landfall in Myanmar, killing hundreds and devastating communities in its path, aid groups seeking to deliver humanitarian assistance remained stymied by the junta on Thursday as survivors faced growing threats of hunger and illness.

Pierre Peron, a spokesman for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said relief agencies were ready to deliver food, medicine and other much-needed supplies, but were awaiting the military regime's approval.

Aid groups fear that the death toll, estimated by some at more than 450, will only rise as victims of the cyclone face food shortages, disease, a lack of clean water and the loss of their homes. Survivors also face the threat of unexploded land mines that may have moved during the flooding. An estimated 5.4 million people in Myanmar were affected by the storm.

Without swift aid, humanitarian experts fear that the number of deaths could climb, as was the case after Cyclone Nargis, the catastrophic 2008 cyclone that struck Myanmar farther to the east and killed more than 135,000. The military government at the time also was criticized for its slow response.

"We have asked for unrestricted access to affected communities," Mr. Peron said. "To deliver, we will need access to affected people, relaxation of travel authorization requirements and expedited customs clearances for commodities."

The junta has not publicly addressed its decision to block international aid groups from affected areas where rebels seeking autonomy have long been fighting the military. The junta has said it is sending aid, but most survivors interviewed by The New York Times say they have not received any assistance from the military.

A spokesman for the junta could not be reached for comment.

After sharing power with civilian leaders for a decade, the military seized control in a 2021 coup and is now fighting a bloody civil war with armed ethnic groups and pro-democracy forces.

The cyclone struck in areas where much of the fighting has occurred, including Rakhine State, Chin State and Magway Region. Rescue workers, activists and flood survivors say the military is reluctant to let outsiders into the area because it wants to maintain control of who receives aid.

In Matupi, a town in Chin State, the farmer Salai Khaung Lian, 68, said he fled to higher ground in the forest with his wife and two grandsons on Sunday before the storm hit. The cyclone blew the roof off their home, and now they have no place to go.

"We don't have shelter, food or drink," he said by phone. "I just hope we get help before we die."

On Thursday, the junta reported that 48 people had died in the storm, although rescuers in one devastated area told The Times the number was nearly 10 times that.

Dr. Win Myat Aye, the minister of humanitarian affairs and disaster management for the rival National Unity Government, said that at least 455 people had died, according to reports he had received.

Most of the dead were Rohingya Muslims who were among those herded into relocation camps more than a decade ago, he said.

"The main reason the Rohingyas are dying in large numbers during the cyclone is that they have to live in a small area with a large population," he said. "The majority of Rohingya deaths are due to lack of freedom of movement and unfair restrictions on their rights."

The minister called on the junta to let international humanitarian organizations deliver assistance without restrictions.

"International organizations have announced how they will help," he said. "But to help the displaced people, they must abide by the junta's agenda. The military says it will help all the people, but in reality, words and deeds are different."

One of the hardest hit places was the area around Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State, where many of the Rohingya camps are located.

One rescue worker there, U Tin Naing, estimated that 95 percent of the homes in the area were damaged or destroyed. At least 400 bodies had been found, he said, and they were buried immediately.

"We are still counting," he said. "We still can't total the number of dead because of the poor phone lines and internet connection."

Khaing Thu Kha, a spokesman for the Arakan Army, which has battled the Myanmar military in its bid for autonomy since 2009, said the region was in desperate need of assistance.

"When the storm hit, the food that was collected to help ahead of time was damaged by the rain," he said. "Shelter, food, drinking water and medicine are urgently needed."

Soldiers made a show of delivering food Wednesday to Rohingya living in one camp, but people living in several nearby camps said they had received nothing.

In Matupi, about 100 miles north of Sittwe, activists said the ongoing war between resistance fighters and the military would complicate recovery efforts.

"Because it is a war-torn area," said Salai Mang Hre Lian, program manager for the Chin Human Rights Organization, "we are worried about the risk from military land mines and unexploded bombs exposed by the storm."

Where else can you watch the biggest music videos, every landmark global moment, and the most breathtaking performances of all time?

Where else can you watch every trailer ever made, every single sports highlight, and then go learn how to fix your bike?

Where else can you find millions of incredible creators, phenomenal storytellers who document our culture, our dreams, and our triumphs?

Truth is, there's only one place that offers all this.

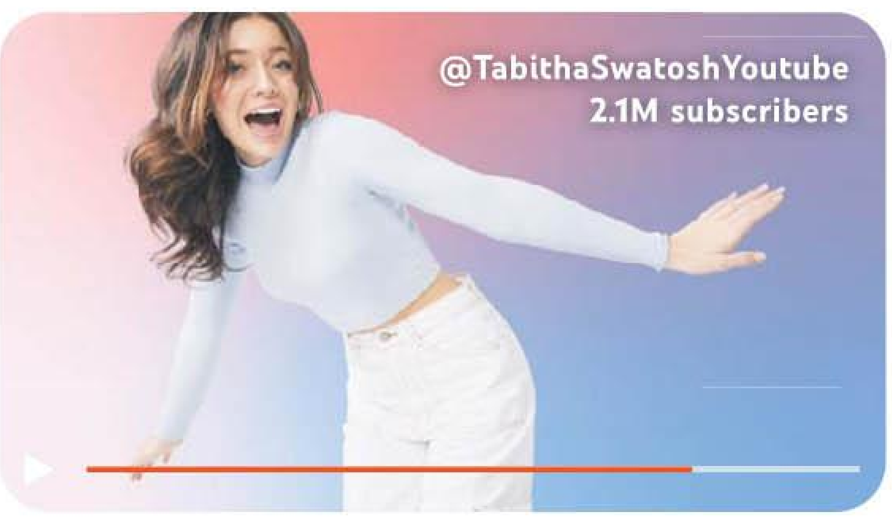
IN A WORLD WHERE YOU CAN WATCH ANYTHING,
THE WORLD WATCHES YOUTUBE




@TatyCokley
913K subscribers


@TheFitnessMarshall
5M subscribers


@AlanChikinChow
23.5M subscribers


@TabithaSwatoshYoutube
2.1M subscribers


@TheCrazyGorilla
2.2M subscribers


@StudioJibby
102K subscribers


@MichelleKhare
3.6M subscribers


@JustMaiko
3.1M subscribers


@SmokinandGrillinwithAB
2.4M subscribers


@benoftheweek
6.2M subscribers

Brandcast

National

The New York Times



STEFANI REYNOLDS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

A rally in Washington in 2021 against antisemitism. At right, a White House discussion of hate with Jewish leaders and the second gentleman, Doug Emhoff.

Preaching Tolerance Abroad As Hatred Surges at Home



SHAWN THEW/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Deborah Lipstadt, who was nominated to be President Biden's special envoy to monitor antisemitism, was sworn in by Vice President Kamala Harris last year.

By ELIZABETH WILLIAMSON

WASHINGTON — A year ago, Deborah Lipstadt, newly confirmed as the U.S. special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism, attended a White House reception and reintroduced herself to President Biden as he passed by.

"I know who you are," Dr. Lipstadt recalled the president telling her. "And you have a big job."

Mr. Biden was right, but for reasons neither of them fully imagined.

Dr. Lipstadt, whose role at the State Department for the first time carries the rank of ambassador, "leads efforts to advance U.S. foreign policy to counter antisemitism throughout the world," according to her job description. But as she spreads a message of tolerance across Europe and the Middle East, an alarming rise of antisemitic attacks and rhetoric at home in the United States has changed her approach to the job.

"My predecessors could go to countries and say, 'You have a problem, and we take this seriously, and you should take it seriously.' I can't do that. I have to go and say, 'We have a problem.'"

Dr. Lipstadt, 76, has spent her career studying antisemitism. To take the envoy position, she took a leave from teaching at Emory University, where she is the founding director of the Tam Institute for Jewish Studies.

"Antisemitism is not a niche issue," she said in an interview. "It is an existential threat to democracy."

The special envoy's role was created two decades ago, but Dr. Lipstadt, the highest-profile scholar to hold the position, serves a president doing something new: seeking Europe's help in battling a 2,000-year-old prejudice resurgent in America.

In February, Doug Emhoff, the husband of Vice President Kamala Harris, hosted European special envoys at the White House to advise the United States on a national strategy for combating antisemitism. The move surprised some envoys more accustomed to the United States' lecturing on the topic.

"This was an acknowledgment that antisemitism is a serious problem in the U.S. too, and an action plan has to be worked out in order to address it more strategically, not only as a reaction to antisemitic incidents," said Felix Klein, a German government commissioner for Jewish life and countering antisemitism, who attended the conference. "It's a much more cooperative approach."

Last year there were 3,697 reported incidents of antisemitic assault, harassment and vandalism in the United States, according to an annual audit by the Anti-Defamation League. The figure, a 36 percent increase over 2021, is the largest number of incidents against Jews in the United States since the organization began its assessments in 1979.

Diplomacy is new to Dr. Lipstadt, a native of Queens, N.Y., who was once a rapid-fire voice on Twitter. Her Senate confirmation was held up for eight months, in part because a hard-right senator, Ron Johnson, Republican of Wisconsin, objected to her tweet denouncing his comments about the Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol as "white supremacy/nationalism."

Now, her staff vets her tweets.

Dr. Lipstadt's office is relatively tiny, with a $1.5 million budget and several staff members, supplemented with contractors and diplomats on temporary assignment. Led by presidential appointees, the office changes leadership with each new administration and is subject to shifting priorities; President Trump took two years to name her predecessor.

While Dr. Lipstadt acknowledges domestic antisemitism in meetings abroad, the problems at home are not in her job description. And she must tread carefully in the nations she visits, leaving broader problems in foreign politics to her State Department colleagues.

Her narrow focus is notable in places like Poland, whose right-wing populist government is a frontline ally in the West's efforts to counter Russia, and in Israel, whose far-right government has led to deep strains with the American Jewish community.

She also has been forced to navigate an often contentious debate about the very definition of antisemitism, which some fear can be used to shield Israel from legitimate criticism.

U.S. policy follows the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism, which was widely adopted by Western governments after lobbying by Jewish groups, E.U. leaders and the alliance itself.

But that definition has come under fire from scores of Israeli and Jewish scholars and human rights organizations, who say it wrongly casts criticism of Israel as antisemitic.

The alliance's working antisemitism definition has examples related to criticism of Israel, including applying double standards by demanding it behave in ways not expected of other democratic countries, or denying Jews the right of self-determination by claiming that the existence of Israel is a racist endeavor.

3,697
Incidents of antisemitic assault, harassment and vandalism in the U.S. in 2022, according to the Anti-Defamation League's annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents.

36%
Increase over 2021 in antisemitic incidents, which is the largest number against Jews in the U.S. since the ADL audit began in 1979.

Dr. Lipstadt touched on the controversy during her confirmation hearing.

"I don't think any rational-minded person would think that criticism of Israeli policies is antisemitic," she said, while adding that some criticism of Israel does "cross the line" into antisemitism.

The person who drafted the antisemitism working definition nearly two decades ago, Kenneth S. Stern, the director of the Center for the Study of Hate at Bard College in New York, is now one its best-known critics. He said the definition has been "weaponized" to stifle criticism of Israel and its conduct toward Palestinians. He is particularly concerned about the definition's impact on college campus debate.

"This is trying to say what can and can't be taught," Mr. Stern said in an interview. "To fight antisemitism you have to preserve democratic institutions. You can't use the state to put a finger on the scale."

Dr. Lipstadt began her tenure as a special envoy with visits to Saudi Arabia, Israel and the United Arab Emirates. The choice to visit Saudi Arabia was criticized by some who cited the kingdom's record of human rights abuses.

"I really think that there's room to make progress with certain Muslim-majority countries," Dr. Lipstadt said. "I want to demonstrate that the territorial crisis in the Middle East, which is now at a very tender point, is something separate and apart from prejudice and hatred."

On the Saudi trip, she said, "I happened to be sitting with an imam who said to me, 'If Israel solved the Palestinian issue, there would be no antisemitism.'"

The professor in her wanted to trace the history of antisemitism back to the 12th century.

Instead, she recalled the battle in New York City over a proposal for a Muslim community center, open to the public, several blocks from the former World Trade Center site. Tensions that lingered for years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks contributed to Islamophobia and an uproar that eventually scuttled plans for what its opponents called "the ground zero mosque."

The imam agreed with Dr. Lipstadt that the community center opposition was an example of a broader prejudice. Likewise, she offered, the territorial dispute in Israel should not be a reason for prejudice against Jews in the wider world.

"Not to diminish the importance of the territorial conflict, but antisemitism is something that exists separate and apart from that," she said. "As I said to an ambassador from a majority-Muslim country recently, now is the time more than ever to double down on the fight against prejudice."

Last year, she met with executives of the German airline Lufthansa after the airline barred scores of passengers wearing the distinctive dress of ultra-Orthodox Jews from a connecting flight from Germany to Hungary, after some of the passengers refused to wear medical masks. In the meeting, Dr. Lipstadt again emphasized the link between antisemitism and all forms of bigotry. "This was at the very best unconscious bias," she said. "Imagine if four Black kids had misbehaved and you took every Black person off the plane."

Lufthansa publicly apologized, and said it would overhaul employee training with help from American Jewish Committee experts. The airline agreed to a $2.7 million settlement with the passengers barred from the flight.

She was in Israel in July when a group of ultra-Orthodox teens and young men disrupted bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies at the Western Wall's egalitarian plaza. The extremists tore up prayer books, blew whistles and shouted "Nazis" and "animals" at the worshipers.

"Deeply disturbed by the troubling actions of a group of extremists last week at the Kotel," Dr. Lipstadt wrote on Twitter, referring to the Western Wall. "Let us make no mistake, had such a hateful incident — such incitement — happened in any other country, there'd be little hesitation in labeling it antisemitism."

Jynneos Jab Is Effective On Mpox, Studies Say

By EMILY ANTHES

The Jynneos vaccine provides real-world protection against mpox, and two doses seem to be more effective than one, according to three new observational studies published on Thursday.

The effectiveness of two doses of the vaccine ranged from 66 percent to 88 percent, depending on the study, while the effectiveness of a single dose ranged from 36 percent to 75 percent. The researchers also concluded that what is known as intradermal dosing — which involves injecting the vaccine between layers of skin, rather than underneath it, and requires just one-fifth of the dose — provides protection roughly equivalent to the conventional, under-the-skin injection.

The research was published in a weekly report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and in The New England Journal of Medicine.

Many questions remain about the vaccine, which had not been widely used before last summer's outbreak of mpox, formerly called monkeypox, largely among men who have sex with men. None of the new studies were randomized controlled trials, and some of the analyses were small.

More work is needed to determine how well the vaccine works in immunocompromised people, how long protection lasts and whether that varies depending on how the shots are given.

A resurgence is possible.

In the United States, there have been more than 30,000 mpox cases over the last year, with cases declining sharply after last summer's peak. Mpox cases have fallen off globally, too, and the World Health Organization declared an end to the public health emergency this month.

"But the outbreak is not over, and we need to remain alert and continue our prevention efforts," Dr. Christopher Braden, the mpox response incident manager at the C.D.C., said at a news briefing on Thursday.

More than 1.2 million doses of the vaccine have been administered in the United States over the last year. But the number of doses administered has declined since last summer, and nationally just 23 percent of people who are considered to be at risk have been fully vaccinated, according to the C.D.C. There are also wide geographic, racial and ethnic disparities in vaccine coverage.

And it is clear that the vaccine is not a silver bullet. In a new cluster of cases recently reported in Chicago, many of the patients were fully vaccinated.

The Chicago Department of Health and the C.D.C. are currently investigating this cluster, which now includes 21 people, all of whom have had mild symptoms, Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, the White House national mpox response deputy coordinator, said at the briefing on Thursday.

"What we do know, however, is that vaccination makes getting and spreading mpox less likely and importantly, may decrease the chances of severe illness, hospitalization and death, even if it doesn't prevent infection," he said.

The vaccine was largely unknown.

Jynneos, which is manufactured by a small Danish company, is the safer of the two vaccines available for mpox. It was initially intended to be given as two doses, both injected underneath the skin, 28 days apart.

Because supplies of the vaccine were limited, however, officials deviated from the intended regimen.

Some began administering just a single dose of the vaccine, which some studies had suggested might provide considerable protection. Then, last August, federal officials provided an emergency authorization for intradermal dosing to help stretch the supply.

But there has been little evidence regarding the effectiveness of these strategies, which were based largely on research findings and not on the real experiences of patients.

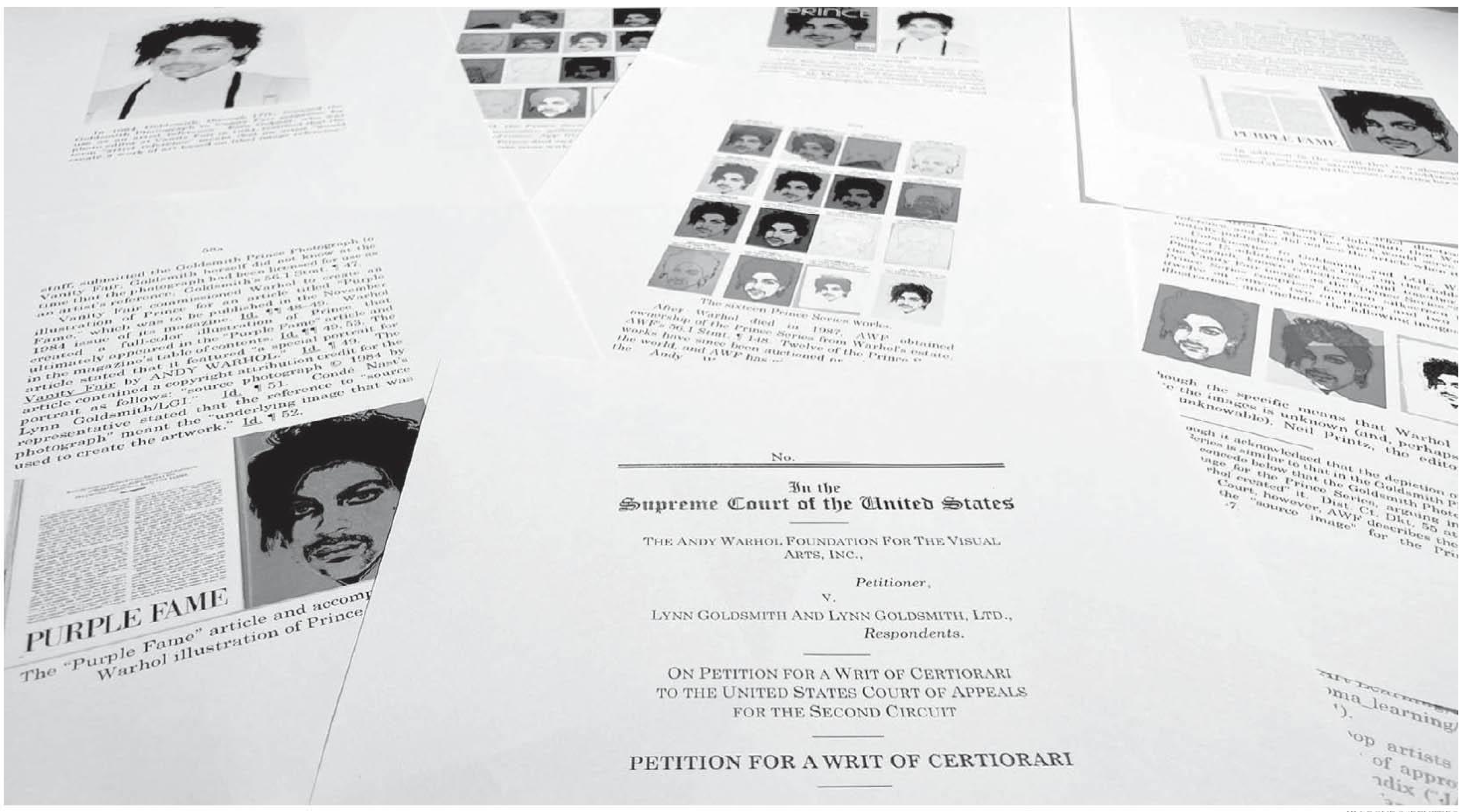
Officials prepare a new push for vaccination.

Cases may increase in the coming weeks "as people gather for festivals and other events," the C.D.C. has warned. Public health experts and officials are urging people who are at risk to get vaccinated before Pride events begin next month.

"For me, the top-line message would be if you haven't gotten one dose, get it now, because you do need to wait four weeks before you get your second dose," said Dr. Jacqueline L. Gerhart, the chief medical officer at Epic Research and one of the lead investigators of the N.E.J.M. study.

Additional studies of the vaccine, including research into how well it holds up over time, are currently underway, Dr. Daskalakis said.

Sharon Otterman contributed reporting.



JIM BOURG/REUTERS

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts was unable to successfully employ a fair-use defense in its case against the photographer Lynn Goldsmith.

Supreme Court Rules Against Warhol in Copyright Case

By ADAM LIPTAK

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court ruled on Thursday that Andy Warhol was not entitled to draw on a prominent photographer's portrait of Prince for an image of the musician that his estate licensed to a magazine, limiting the scope of the fair-use defense to copyright infringement in the realm of visual art.

The vote was 7 to 2. Justice Sonia Sotomayor, writing for the majority, said the photographer's "original works, like those of other photographers, are entitled to copyright protection, even against famous artists."

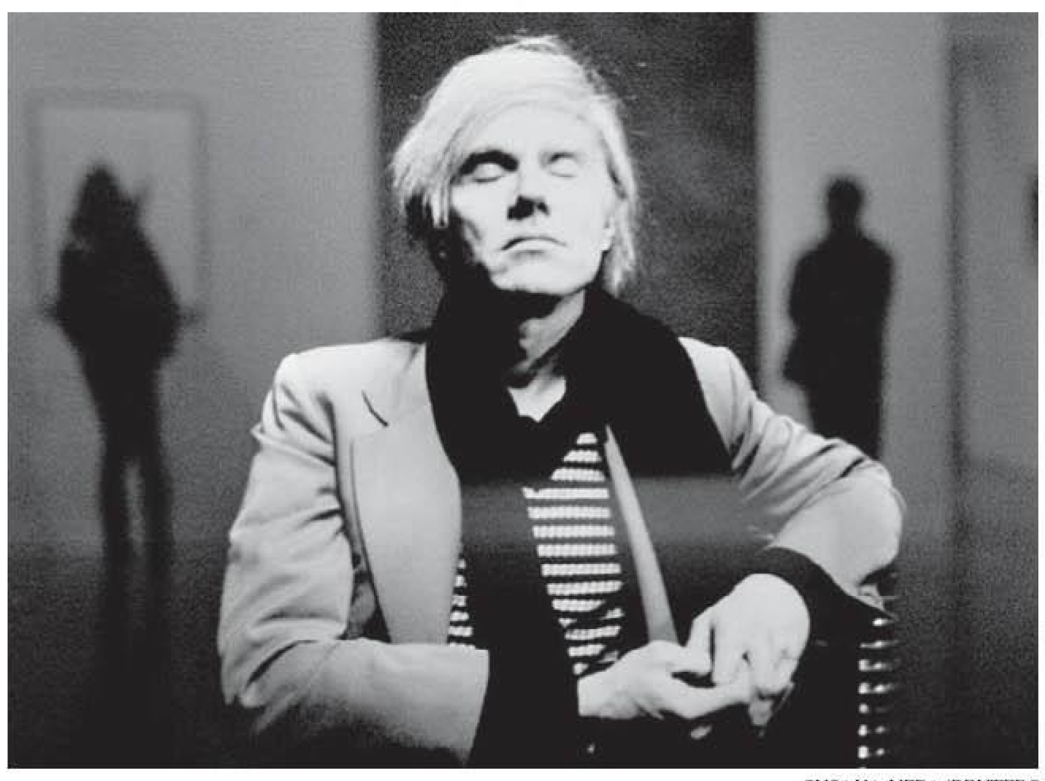
She focused on the fact that Warhol and Lynn Goldsmith, the photographer whose work he altered, were both engaged in the commercial enterprise of licensing images of Prince to magazines.

"To hold otherwise would potentially authorize a range of commercial copying of photographs, to be used for purposes that are substantially the same as those of the originals," Justice Sotomayor wrote. "As long as the user somehow portrays the subject of the photograph differently, he could make modest alterations to the original, sell it to an outlet to accompany a story about the subject, and claim transformative use."

In dissent, Justice Elena Kagan, joined by Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., wrote that the decision "will stifle creativity of every sort."

"It will impede new art and music and literature," she wrote. "It will thwart the expression of new ideas and the attainment of new knowledge. It will make our world poorer."

The dueling opinions, from two liberal justices who are often allies, had an unusually sharp tone.



SUSANA VERA/REUTERS

A portrait of the artist Andy Warhol by Timm Rautert. Warhol altered a photograph of Prince by Ms. Goldsmith in 1984.

Justice Kagan's opinion, Justice Sotomayor wrote, was made up of "a series of misstatements and exaggerations, from the dissent's very first sentence to its very last."

Justice Kagan responded that Justice Sotomayor wholly failed to appreciate Warhol's art.

"The majority does not see it," Justice Kagan wrote. "And I mean that literally. There is precious little evidence in today's opinion that the majority has actually looked at these images, much less that it has engaged with expert views of their aesthetics and meaning."

The decision was also unusual for including more than a dozen reproductions of artworks by Warhol and others, most of them in color.

The portrait of Prince at issue in the case was taken in 1981 by Lynn Goldsmith, a successful rock photographer on assignment for Newsweek.

In 1984, around the time Prince released "Purple Rain," Vanity Fair hired Warhol to create a work to accompany an article titled "Purple Fame." The magazine paid Ms. Goldsmith $400 to license the portrait as an "artist reference," agreeing to credit her and to use it only in connection with a single issue.

In a series of 16 images, Warhol altered the photograph in various ways, notably by cropping and coloring it to create what his foundation's lawyers described as "a flat, impersonal, disembodied, mask-like appearance." Vanity Fair ran one of them.

Warhol died in 1987, and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts assumed ownership of his work. When Prince died in 2016, Vanity Fair's parent company, Condé Nast, published a special issue celebrating his life. It paid the foundation $10,250 to use a different image from the series for the cover. Ms. Goldsmith received no money or credit.

Litigation followed, much of it focused on whether Warhol had transformed Ms. Goldsmith's photograph. The Supreme Court has said a work is transformative if it "adds something new, with a further purpose or different character, altering the first with new expression, meaning or message."

Justice Kagan rejected the idea that those photographs and Warhol's image were fungible.

"Suppose you were the editor of Vanity Fair or Condé Nast, publishing an article about Prince," she wrote. "You need, of course, some kind of picture. An employee comes to you with two options: the Goldsmith photo, the Warhol portrait. Would you say that you don't really care? That the employee is free to flip a coin? In the majority's view, you apparently would."

She added: "All I can say is that it's a good thing the majority isn't in the magazine business. Of course you would care!"

The majority's analysis, Justice Kagan wrote, was simplistic and wooden.

"All of Warhol's artistry and social commentary," she wrote, "is negated by one thing: Warhol licensed his portrait to a magazine, and Goldsmith sometimes licensed her photos to magazines too. That is the sum and substance of the majority opinion."

The case, Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts v. Goldsmith, No. 21-869, concerned the limits of the fair-use defense, which allows copying that would otherwise be unlawful if it involves activities like criticism and news reporting.

Lower courts differed about whether Warhol's alterations of the photograph transformed it into something different. Judge John G. Koeltl of the Federal District Court in Manhattan ruled that Warhol had created something new by imbuing the photograph with fresh meaning.

But a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit said that judges should compare how similar the two works are and leave the interpretation of their meaning to others.

"The district judge should not assume the role of art critic and seek to ascertain the intent behind or meaning of the works at issue," Judge Gerard E. Lynch wrote for the panel. "That is so both because judges are typically unsuited to make aesthetic judgments and because such perceptions are inherently subjective."

Justice Sotomayor wrote that a crucial factor in the fair-use analysis — "the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes" — weighed in Ms. Goldsmith's favor.

"Warhol himself paid to license photographs for some of his artistic renditions," Justice Sotomayor wrote. "Such licenses, for photographs or derivatives of them, are how photographers like Goldsmith make a living. They provide an economic incentive to create original works, which is the goal of copyright."

Other Warhol works, like Warhol's images of Campbell's soup cans, were a different matter, she wrote.

"The purpose of Campbell's logo is to advertise soup. Warhol's canvases do not share that purpose," Justice Sotomayor wrote. "Rather, the soup cans series uses Campbell's copyrighted work for an artistic commentary on consumerism."

Justices Give Two Wins to Tech Giants Over Liability for Users' Posts

From Page A1

ests them.

"So, for example," Justice Thomas wrote, "a person who watches cooking shows on YouTube is more likely to see cooking-based videos and advertisements for cookbooks, whereas someone who likes to watch professorial lectures might see collegiate debates and advertisements for TED Talks.

"But," he added, "not all of the content on defendants' platforms is so benign." In particular, "ISIS uploaded videos that fund-raised for weapons of terror and that showed brutal executions of soldiers and civilians alike."

The platforms' failure to remove such content, Justice Thomas wrote, was not enough to establish liability for aiding and abetting, which he said required plausible allegations that they "gave such knowing and substantial assistance to ISIS that they culpably participated in the Reina attack."

The plaintiffs had not cleared that bar, Justice Thomas wrote. "Plaintiffs' claims fall far short of plausibly alleging that defendants aided and abetted the Reina attack," he wrote.

The platforms' algorithms did not change the analysis, he wrote.

"The algorithms appear agnostic as to the nature of the content, matching any content (including ISIS' content) with any user who is more likely to view that content," Justice Thomas wrote. "The fact that these algorithms matched some ISIS content with some users thus does not convert defendants' passive assistance into active abetting."



AARON WOJACK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Twitter's headquarters in San Francisco. The Supreme Court's decision in Twitter v. Taamneh effectively resolved two cases.

A contrary ruling, he added, would expose the platforms to potential liability for "each and every ISIS terrorist act committed anywhere in the world."

The court's decision in the case, Twitter v. Taamneh, No. 21-1496, allowed the justices to avoid ruling on the scope of Section 230, a law intended to nurture what was then a nascent creation called the internet.

Section 230 was a reaction to a decision holding an online message board liable for what a user had posted because the service had engaged in some content moderation. The provision said, "No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider."

Section 230 helped enable the rise of huge social networks like Facebook and Twitter by ensuring that the sites did not assume legal liability with every new tweet, status update and comment. Limiting the sweep of the law could expose the platforms to lawsuits claiming they had steered people to posts and videos that promoted extremism, urged violence, harmed reputations and caused emotional distress.

The case against Google was brought by the family of Nohemi Gonzalez, a 23-year-old college student who was killed in a restaurant in Paris during terrorist attacks there in November 2015, which also targeted the Bataclan concert hall. The family's lawyers argued that YouTube, a subsidiary of Google, had used algorithms to push Islamic State videos to interested viewers.

In a brief, unsigned opinion in the case, Gonzalez v. Google, No. 21-1333, the court said it would not "address the application of Section 230 to a complaint that appears to state little, if any, plausible claim for relief." The court instead returned the case to the appeals court "in light of our decision in Twitter."

It is unclear what the ruling will mean for legislative efforts to eliminate or modify the legal shield.

A growing group of bipartisan lawmakers, academics and activists have grown skeptical of Section 230 and say that it has shielded giant tech companies from consequences for disinformation, discrimination and violent content across their platforms.

In recent years, they have advanced a new argument: that the platforms forfeit their protections when their algorithms recommend content, target ads or introduce new connections to their users. These recommendation engines are pervasive, powering features like YouTube's autoplay function and Instagram's suggestions of accounts to follow. Judges have mostly rejected this reasoning.

Members of Congress have also called for changes to the law. But political realities have largely stopped those proposals from gaining traction. Republicans, angered by tech companies that remove posts by conservative politicians and publishers, want the platforms to take down less content. Democrats want the platforms to remove more, like false information about Covid-19.

Critics of Section 230 had mixed responses to the court's decision, or lack of one, in the Gonzalez case.

Senator Marsha Blackburn, a Tennessee Republican who has criticized major tech platforms, said on Twitter that Congress needed to step in to reform the law because the companies "turn a blind eye" to harmful activities online.

Hany Farid, a computer science professor at the University of California, Berkeley, who signed a brief supporting the Gonzalez family's case, said that he was heartened that the court had not offered a full-throated defense of the Section 230 liability shield.

He added that he thought "the door is still open for a better case with better facts" to challenge the tech platforms' immunity.

Tech companies and their allies have warned that any alterations to Section 230 would cause the online platforms to take down far more content to avoid any potential legal liability.

Jess Miers, legal advocacy counsel for Chamber of Progress, a lobbying group that represents tech firms including Google and Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, said in a statement that arguments in the case made clear that "changing Section 230's interpretation would create more issues than it would solve."

David McCabe contributed reporting.

States' Case On Migration Is Dismissed By Justices

By ADAM LIPTAK

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed an attempt by Republican-led states to maintain the pandemic-era immigration measure known as Title 42.

The court's brief order was one sentence long, instructing an appeals court to dismiss the states' motion to intervene in the case as moot. The move was almost surely prompted by the end of the health emergency that had been used to justify Title 42.

In a brief filed in February, Solicitor General Elizabeth B. Prelogar told the court that "absent other relevant developments, the end of the public health emergency will (among other consequences) terminate the Title 42 orders and moot this case."

In a sign that the court was inclined to agree, it canceled arguments in the case about a week later.

Title 42 had allowed migrants who might otherwise have qualified for asylum to be swiftly expelled at the border with Mexico. The policy, introduced by the Trump administration in March 2020, has been used to expel migrants — including many asylum seekers — about 2.5 million times. The measure was lifted on May 11.

The question the court had agreed to decide, and now will not, was whether the states that had sought keep the measure in place were entitled to pursue their challenge. Ms. Prelogar wrote in February that "the mooting of the underlying case would also moot petitioners' attempt to intervene."

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson dissented on Thursday, saying she would have gotten to largely the same place by a slightly different route by dismissing the case as "improvidently granted."

Justice Neil M. Gorsuch used the occasion to issue eight pages of reflections on "the disruption we have experienced over the last three years in how our laws are made and our freedoms observed," referring to the pandemic.

Declaring moot a bid to maintain Title 42, which was tied to the pandemic emergency.

Justice Gorsuch, joined by Justice Jackson, issued a dissent in December when the court agreed to hear the case.

The legal question that the court agreed to address, about the states' intervention, he wrote at the time, "is not of special importance in its own right and would not normally warrant expedited review."

By issuing a stay while it addressed that question, he added, the court effectively took an incorrect position, at least temporarily, on the larger issue in the case: whether the pandemic justified the immigration policy.

"The current border crisis is not a Covid crisis," Justice Gorsuch wrote. "And courts should not be in the business of perpetuating administrative edicts designed for one emergency only because elected officials have failed to address a different emergency. We are a court of law, not policymakers of last resort."

In his statement on Thursday, Justice Gorsuch made some more general observations about the impact of the pandemic on the rule of law.

"Since March 2020, we may have experienced the greatest intrusions on civil liberties in the peacetime history of this country," he wrote. "Executive officials across the country issued emergency decrees on a breathtaking scale. Governors and local leaders imposed lockdown orders forcing people to remain in their homes. They shuttered businesses and schools, public and private. They closed churches even as they allowed casinos and other favored businesses to carry on."

He added that "it seems federal officials may have pressured social-media companies to suppress information about pandemic policies with which they disagreed."

The lesson, Justice Gorsuch wrote, is that "fear and the desire for safety are powerful forces," adding that "even the ancients warned that democracies can degenerate toward autocracy in the face of fear."

He concluded that the courts should be cautious. "At the very least," he wrote, "one can hope that the judiciary will not soon again allow itself to be part of the problem by permitting litigants to manipulate our docket to perpetuate a decree designed for one emergency to address another."

'Biden and Me': DeSantis Privately Tells Donors Trump Can't Win

This article is by Maggie Haberman, Jonathan Swan and Nicholas Nehamas.

Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida all but declared his presidential candidacy on Thursday afternoon, telling donors and supporters on a call that only three "credible" candidates were in the race and that only he would be able to win both the Republican primary and the general election.

"You have basically three people at this point that are credible in this whole thing," Mr. DeSantis told donors on the call, organized by the super PAC supporting him, Never Back Down. "Biden, Trump and me. And I think of those three, two have a chance to get elected president — Biden and me, based on all the data in the swing states, which is not great for the former president and probably insurmountable because people aren't going to change their view of him."

The call, to which a New York Times reporter listened, came as the governor is expected to officially enter the presidential race next week, according to three people familiar with his intentions.

Mr. DeSantis is expected to file paperwork declaring his candidacy with the Federal Election Commission ahead of a major fund-raising meeting with donors in Miami on May 25 that is meant to act as a show of his financial force. He must formally enter the race before he can solicit donations for his presidential campaign.

He is also likely to release a video to coincide with his official entrance into the race, and a blitz of events in the early nominating states will follow in the weeks ahead, according to one of the people. The Wall Street Journal first reported that Mr. DeSantis would file the paperwork next week.

During the phone call on Thursday afternoon, the governor said the attitude of Republican voters amounted to, "We've got to win this time." And while he praised Mr. Trump's policies, he said that Mr. Biden had undone many of them.

"The corporate media wants Trump to be the nominee," Mr. DeSantis said, adding that journalists, other candidates and "two presidents" had targeted him with criticism.

Mr. DeSantis quoted a voter he had talked with at an event in Iowa as saying, "You know, Trump was somebody, we liked his policies but we didn't like his values. And with you, we like your policies but also know that you share our values."

And Mr. DeSantis described his efforts to help the party, noting that Mr. Trump and other Republicans had repeatedly attacked him. "There are some that kind of raise money just for themselves," he said, an unmistakable jab at Mr. Trump, who was criticized during the midterm elections for sitting on a large pile of cash in his political action committee and not doing enough to help others.

He also boasted of his successful visit to Des Moines over the weekend after Mr. Trump canceled his own rally in the area, citing a tornado watch.

Mr. DeSantis talked with pride about the Florida legislative session and the state's budget, walking through a list of items that he was happy to have accomplished on environmental issues and education. He described a "great body of work" and said he would not "cede any issues to the left."

He did not take questions and was the only person who spoke on the call. But he suggested that his ability to respond to what he described as months of attacks would soon change, a veiled reference to becoming a candidate.

"When we say we're going to do something, we do it, and get it done," Mr. DeSantis said of his approach in the state, an indirect contrast with Mr. Trump, whom some Republicans have criticized for unfinished work when he was president.

Mr. DeSantis suggested that Mr. Trump had leaned too heavily on executive action instead of helping push measures through Congress, and pointed to his own work during legislative sessions in Florida as a contrast.

Mr. DeSantis, who was a Navy officer during the Iraq war, noted that he would be the only veteran in the race. And he drew a distinction in another area of Mr. Trump's record, one that harks back to Mr. DeSantis's time as a congressman elected the cycle after the Tea Party wave of 2010, when the focus was on limiting government spending.

"Certainly in the Trump administration, there wasn't the emphasis" on curtailing spending that there was during the Tea Party era, he said. The comment was notable given that a week earlier, Mr. Trump had argued at a CNN town-hall event for letting the country default on the debt ceiling. House Republicans and Mr. Biden have been in weekslong deadlock on whether to raise the debt limit.

At another point, Mr. DeSantis was blunt, saying, "I think the voters want to move on from Biden," adding, "They just want a vehicle they can get behind" but "there's just too many voters that don't view Trump as that vehicle."

Mr. DeSantis also talked about the release of his book, "The Courage to Be Free," and his book tour, including that the book had been on the New York Times best-seller list for several weeks. He described himself as selling far more books than Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton did when they published memoirs before announcing their campaigns for the presidency.

The volume of his sales was "not normal for people in elected office" who write books, he said, adding, "For us to exceed both of those, I think, is really, really significant."

Mr. DeSantis, however, was dealt a potential political blow on Thursday as Disney pulled out of a $1 billion office development project in Orlando that would have brought more than 2,000 jobs to the region. The move highlighted the ongoing fallout of his targeting of Disney after the company's chief executive at the time criticized Florida legislation to restrict instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in public schools.

Mr. DeSantis did not mention the Disney battle or the education law on the call with donors, many of whom are business officials who don't favor those moves of his. And Mr. DeSantis, who has made his political brand in part on fighting what he calls "woke" culture, spent little time on such issues on the call.

Mr. Trump is running roughly 30 percentage points ahead of Mr. DeSantis in national polling averages, but the Florida governor would be the strongest Republican challenger to join the field so far. Mr. DeSantis told the people on the call that he did not put much stock in those polls, saying that he had started as an underdog in past races and that the polls before his re-election in 2022 showed a much smaller margin of victory than he ended up with.

He is likely to start with more money in an outside group than any Republican primary candidate in history. He has more than $80 million expected to be transferred from his state account to his super PAC, which has also raised more than $30 million, in addition to having tens of millions more in donor commitments, according to people familiar with the fund-raising.

Mr. DeSantis also has a long series of conservative policy accomplishments that he shepherded through Florida's Republican-dominated Legislature after his landslide re-election last year. And he has gathered a large number of endorsements from state legislators in Iowa and New Hampshire, who can be influential in primary elections, as well as from those in his own state.

Still, taking on Mr. Trump, whom Republicans rallied behind after he was indicted in New York, is a tall order. While the former president savages him daily, Mr. DeSantis needs to engage in a delicate dance.

To win, he must appeal to the large numbers of Republican primary voters who like Mr. Trump but may be ready to move on from a candidate who lost in 2020 and continues to repeat false claims about that election. Doing so requires Mr. DeSantis to differentiate himself from Mr. Trump without criticizing him so aggressively that he risks offending those Trump-friendly voters.

Maggie Haberman reported from New York, Jonathan Swan from Washington and Nicholas Nehamas from Miami.



HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida has long been a presumptive but undeclared rival to former President Donald J. Trump.

Senator's Brain Swelling Had Not Been Disclosed

From Page A1

that had raised questions about her mental capacity.

The grim tableau of her re-emergence on Capitol Hill laid bare a bleak reality known to virtually everyone who has come into contact with her in recent days: She was far from ready to return to work when she did, and she is now struggling to function in a job that demands long days, near-constant engagement on an array of critical policy issues and high-stakes decision-making.

In the statement provided after The Times's article was published on Thursday, Ms. Feinstein's spokesman acknowledged that the senator continued to experience the effects of Ramsay Hunt syndrome. Her office declined to comment further for this article, beyond a statement from Ms. Feinstein saying: "I'm back in Washington, voting and attending committee meetings while I recover from complications related to a shingles diagnosis. I continue to work and get results for California."

Many people close to Ms. Feinstein, a six-term senator, described seeing her operating in the Senate in her current state as "frightening," a tragic end to a formidable career in politics that they worry is casting a shadow over her legacy and her achievements. More immediately, it has resurfaced questions about whether Ms. Feinstein, who has announced she will retire when her term ends in January 2025, is fit to continue serving even for that long.

Ms. Feinstein, a pioneering woman in Democratic politics who was once a major party power broker and a legislative force in the Senate, has stubbornly refused to consider leaving. The same force of will that led her nearly a decade ago to resist pressure from the Obama administration to keep secret a damning torture report rears its head when she is confronted with calls to step down. The senator still sees the job as her calling and is no more receptive to a conversation about stepping aside than she was in 2018, when she decided to seek another term despite questions about her mental acuity.

People close to her joke privately that perhaps when Ms. Feinstein is dead, she will start to consider resigning. Over the years, she and many Democrats have bristled at the calls for her to relinquish her post, noting that such questions were rarely raised about aging male senators who remained in office through physical and cognitive struggles, even after they were plainly unable to function on their own.

But after her latest illness, even some of Ms. Feinstein's allies have grown uneasy about her situation.

"I admire the senator deeply, and I am sorry she is so not well," said Susie Tompkins Buell, a major Democratic donor and a longtime Feinstein supporter. But she added: "The Senate has critical, challenging work to do, and as the stakes are so high and she is not able to be present, to be informed and active, let alone have the rest she needs in order to recover, I feel she needs to step down. And yet she isn't willing in this state of mind."

Ms. Buell said Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the majority leader, or Gov. Gavin Newsom of California, who would appoint a successor should Ms. Feinstein resign before the end of her term, have "the responsibility to do something."

Neither has directly implored her to leave, as the senator has deflected almost every effort to have a serious discussion about her future.

At home in San Francisco during her recovery, Ms. Feinstein refused to have contact with California lawmakers who tried checking in with her. A call from Mr. Newsom on her personal phone was answered by an aide and went unreturned. An offer of an in-person visit from Senator Alex Padilla, Democrat of California, was flatly rejected. Even some family members who wanted to see her were turned away.

Throughout her latest health ordeal, Ms. Feinstein remained adamant about her need to return to work. She agitated to return to Washington as pressure mounted for her to step aside or physically show up to vote so that Democrats could advance President Biden's judicial nominees and move ahead with their agenda in the closely divided Senate.

One person whose call she would take was Mr. Schumer, who in multiple conversations with Ms. Feinstein encouraged her to listen to the advice of her doctors. But when it became clear that she had no desire to discuss leaving office, Mr. Schumer began planning for her to return to Washington, according to several people familiar with the conversations.

"After talking with her multiple times over the past few weeks, it's clear she's back where she wants to be and ready to deliver for California," Mr. Schumer said in a statement on the day of Ms. Feinstein's return. He greeted her in front of the Capitol as an aide helped her from a car into her wheelchair.

With Ms. Feinstein's return, Senate Democrats were able to advance three of Mr. Biden's judicial nominees whose approval by the Judiciary Committee had been delayed because of her absence, which deprived her party of the majority it needed to move forward in the face of Republican opposition. Democrats greeted her in the committee with a standing ovation.

But Ms. Feinstein appeared confused about the warm greeting when a small group of reporters asked about it days later.

"I haven't been gone," she said. When pressed on whether she meant that she had been working from home, she pushed back in a manner that suggested she might not have been aware of her long and politically charged absence. "I've been here," she said, appearing to grow agitated. "I've been voting. Please, either know or don't know."



HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Senator Chuck Schumer, left, the majority leader, is said to have encouraged Dianne Feinstein to listen to the advice of her doctors.

Aides who themselves have come under criticism for allowing her to continue in her current state described Ms. Feinstein as still engaged and ultimately in charge of decisions that come out of her office. She reviews and approves work that her staff brings her, they say, and they do not shield her from the toughest news clips about her condition and the calls for her to step aside. But they have also acknowledged that she is not fully up to her senatorial duties; Ms. Feinstein has missed several votes since her return, and aides issued a statement saying she would be working on a "lighter schedule" given her continuing health challenges.

Ms. Feinstein flew on a chartered private plane last week to return to Washington, accompanied by her dog, her longtime housekeeper and Nancy Corinne Prowda, the eldest daughter of Representative Nancy Pelosi of California, the former House speaker who has been a longtime friend of Ms. Feinstein's and has been practically living at her house during her recovery.

The senator's relationship with Ms. Pelosi's daughter goes back decades. The Pelosi family grew up across the street from Ms. Feinstein, people close to her said, and Ms. Prowda has been close with Ms. Feinstein since she was a child, looking up to her as a maternal figure.

But the senator's condition and the political drama surrounding her fate has drawn so much scrutiny that even the presence of one of her closest friends during her convalescence has drawn speculation. Some have read Ms. Prowda's involvement as a tacit endorsement by Ms. Pelosi of Ms. Feinstein's decision to stay on, reasoning that it could give Representative Adam B. Schiff, Democrat of California and Ms. Pelosi's chosen candidate in the crowded race to replace Ms. Feinstein in 2024, a leg up. Mr. Newsom has committed to appointing a Black woman to the seat should it become vacant.

But Ms. Prowda is not involved in politics at all and is as close to Ms. Feinstein as family.

Since Ms. Feinstein's return to Washington, several of her colleagues have privately acknowledged that she is obviously diminished. She should probably not be in the Senate, they said, though Democrats are happy to have her vote when she can.

Ms. Feinstein was ailing before her latest setback. For years, she has sometimes struggled to recall the names of colleagues, frequently had little recollection of meetings or telephone conversations that just took place, and at times walked around in a state of befuddlement. Some lawmakers who have interacted with her have come away with serious concerns that she is mentally incompetent to serve. Others have hung up the phone after conversations in which she repeated the same comments several times in a row with no apparent awareness that she was doing so.

Shingles can potentially contribute to cognitive decline in a number of ways, including by damaging blood vessels of the brain, said Dr. Sharon E. Curhan, a physician and epidemiologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School who is studying the link between shingles and changes in cognition.

But there are few people in Ms. Feinstein's circle who can persuade her that it is time to step down. A longtime friend, former Representative Ellen Tauscher of California, who was known as a "Feinstein whisperer," died in 2019. Her husband, Richard C. Blum, passed away last year, a major setback for Ms. Feinstein.

Some current and former colleagues said the situation was alarming to watch and blamed Senate Republicans — who blocked Ms. Feinstein's request for a temporary replacement on the Judiciary Committee — for upsetting images and sound bites of an infirm and confused senator trying to navigate the Capitol.

"Republicans are responsible for this nightmare scenario that's unfolding," said former Senator Barbara Boxer, who made history with Ms. Feinstein in 1992 as the first female senators elected from California. "I am sick at heart at that. I blame them for being mean to her and spinning it to blame the Democrats."



STEPHEN CROWLEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ms. Feinstein in 1995. She was once a major Democratic Party power broker and a legislative force.

Shawn Hubler contributed reporting from Sacramento, Thomas Fuller from San Francisco, and Benjamin Mueller from New York.

Lawmakers Considering More Security for Offices After Attack on Workers

By STEPHANIE LAI

WASHINGTON — The attack on two congressional aides this week at the Fairfax, Va., office of Representative Gerald E. Connolly has prompted members of Congress and their staffs to consider additional safety measures in their workplaces outside of Washington.

On Monday, two staff aides were injured and subsequently hospitalized after a bat-wielding man entered Mr. Connolly's district office asking for the congressman and then went on a rampage. According to Mr. Connolly, one of his senior aides was hit in the head, and an intern in her first day on the job was hit in the side.

According to an affidavit, the attacker shouted, "I'm going to kill you" and "You're going to die" as he hit one staff member, and later, a witness overheard him shouting "Gerry" and that he "wanted to talk."

It was the latest incident of violence targeting political figures to instill fear on Capitol Hill. Aides throughout the institution were reviewing their emergency plans and discussing possible changes to office policies, including cutting down on face-to-face interactions with people who drop in to district offices.

In February, Representative Angie Craig, Democrat of Minnesota, was assaulted in an elevator at her apartment building a mile from the Capitol. Months earlier, Paul Pelosi, the husband of Representative Nancy Pelosi, Democrat of California, was hospitalized after an encounter with an intruder at their San Francisco home. The man said he was looking for Ms. Pelosi, then the House speaker, and slammed a hammer into Mr. Pelosi's head.

The United States Capitol Police, the agency tasked with protecting the Capitol complex, reported 7,501 threats against members of Congress last year. That was roughly 2,000 fewer than in 2021, but significantly more than the 902 threats investigated in 2016.

While members and staff aides are protected in the Capitol and its surrounding office buildings by the Capitol Police, offices in their respective congressional districts around the country generally do not receive such protection unless there is a specific known threat to the lawmaker.

"Many of us like to think of our district offices as being a place where we welcome our constituents," said Representative Pramila Jayapal, Democrat of Washington, who was verbally harassed by a man wielding a semiautomatic handgun in front of her Seattle home last year. "I don't think that we have, as a body, really given the attention to district offices that we should."

After the attack on Mr. Connolly's office, Jaime Lennon, the communications director for Representative C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger, Democrat of Maryland, said her team was discussing changes.

"We decided that for walk-ins — that would be constituents who haven't made a prior appointment with us — we're just going to try our best to conduct business through the intercom as much as possible, unless we have an established relationship with the constituent," Ms. Lennon said.

Representative Dan Kildee, Democrat of Michigan, said his chief of staff, Mitchell Rivard, had reached out to the House Chiefs of Staff Association to urge top aides to discuss safety practices with their district offices.

"We're going to do what we can in order to minimize the risks that they face," Mr. Kildee said.

Since 2017, members of Congress have been allowed to request additional security measures for district offices from the sergeant-at-arms, the chamber's top law enforcement officer, at no cost, according to a senior Republican aide who insisted on anonymity to discuss security issues. The House sergeant-at-arms has covered the cost of installation and monthly fees for security systems in district offices, including features such as intercoms, motion sensors, cameras, panic buttons, and glass-breaking detection, the aide said.



HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The U.S. Capitol Police protect members of Congress and their staffs, but district offices generally do not receive such protection.

A man with a bat struck two staff members at an office in suburban Virginia.

The sergeant-at-arms can also conduct safety assessments for district offices, at the request of lawmakers. In addition, the office has been looking to increase its contracts with local police departments to provide additional security for members when they return to their home districts.

Members can also use funding set aside by Congress for office operating expenses for security purposes. Many have also dipped into their campaign funds in order to finance such measures. According to a New York Times analysis, members of Congress spent more than $6 million on security from January 2021 to September 2022.

In addition, amid lawmakers' calls for additional safety measures, the House sergeant-at-arms created a program in July 2022 that provided $10,000 for members to secure their residences. The Capitol Police also hired a new intelligence director to improve data collection and sharing, has provided security assessments on members' homes and district offices, and opened two field offices in Florida and California.

Still, the force has struggled with the influx of threats amid severe strains on the department even as funding for the agency has grown in recent years.

"Even with our recent staffing increases, we remain significantly understaffed for an agency that has nationwide jurisdiction and responsibilities, and a growing mission and increasing workload," J. Thomas Manger, the Capitol Police chief, testified at a Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearing last month.

Mark Bednar, a spokesman for Speaker Kevin McCarthy, Republican of California, said in a statement that the speaker had directed the top Capitol law enforcement officials to remind members of the resources available to them following the incident.

Still, lawmakers have been shaken by the latest attack.

Representative Becca Balint, a first-term Democrat from Vermont, said she was in the process of opening up a satellite office in her home state and that the incident at Mr. Connolly's office made her wonder if hers was protected enough.

"We certainly don't sign up to get beat up or to be attacked, but we do sign up to be in the public eye, and our staffers are just trying to support us," Ms. Balint said.

Taking On the F.B.I., G.O.P. Lawmakers Allied With Trump Single Out Ex-Agent

By ADAM GOLDMAN

WASHINGTON — Over 25 years as an F.B.I. agent, Timothy R. Thibault reeled in big names while investigating public corruption, sending two Democratic congressmen to prison and overseeing sensitive inquiries into the Clinton Foundation and the former governor of Virginia, Terry McAuliffe, another Democrat.

But now as Republicans and allies of former President Donald J. Trump work to undermine federal investigations into the former president, they have trained their sights on the little-known Mr. Thibault, who played a role in opening the Justice Department's criminal inquiry into Mr. Trump's efforts to reverse his 2020 election loss. In their casting, Mr. Thibault, who retired last year, is the face of bias and misconduct at the bureau.

Powerful Republican lawmakers, including Representative Jim Jordan and Senator Charles R. Grassley, demanded that Mr. Thibault testify before their committees. Citing an anonymous G.O.P. official, Mr. Jordan's panel in a news release last year denounced Mr. Thibault as "public enemy No. 1."

But his story is more complicated than Republicans have made it out to be. As an investigator working on high-profile public corruption cases and international terrorism, he was well regarded, eventually rising to one of the most senior positions in the bureau's Washington field office and winning internal awards for his professionalism.

But, in an atmosphere in which Republicans have been seeking evidence of anti-conservative bias within the F.B.I., he opened the door to intense scrutiny of his record. Republicans have cited several social media posts — including one that seemed to align him with critics of Mr. Trump — and his handling of a number of cases that touched on claims by Mr. Trump about election fraud and wrongdoing by the Biden family.

A number of current and former F.B.I. agents are siding with the Republicans in seeking to show bias inside the bureau. Some have even joined Mr. Jordan's committee, including two former counterintelligence agents.

Another former agent — who now works for a conservative think tank and sought to solicit information from a right-wing author with links to a former White House strategist for Mr. Trump — appears to have leveled complaints against Mr. Thibault that Mr. Grassley has seized on.

The scrutiny of Mr. Thibault has its roots in his management of a public corruption squad that became mired in conflict, including over investigating Hunter Biden, another focus of inquiry by Republicans on Capitol Hill.

Mr. Thibault was thrust into the harsh spotlight of politics in May 2022, when Mr. Grassley released a letter addressed to the F.B.I. that accused him of partisanship.

The letter laid out his activity on social media, which included expressing support for articles critical of Attorney General William P. Barr and reposting an article in The Atlantic titled, "Donald Trump Is a Broken Man." Mr. Grassley also accused Mr. Thibault of an anti-Catholic post on Twitter about pedophiles. (Mr. Thibault, responding to a Catholic priest denouncing abortion, wrote in his post, "Focus on the pedophiles." Mr. Thibault's friends say that he was raised Catholic.)

Mr. Thibault, his friends and former colleagues say, was an outstanding investigator who is not partisan but knows he displayed poor judgment on social media.

Mr. Thibault worked on many cases involving both parties, his former colleagues said. He was the primary agent who successfully investigated former Representative William J. Jefferson, a New Orleans Democrat, and Jesse L. Jackson Jr., a former Democratic congressman from Illinois. Both were convicted.

Former colleagues have also repeatedly acknowledged his work. In 2006, Mr. Thibault received an annual award recognizing "professional excellence" and "sterling character." He also earned the attorney general's award for distinguished service for his role in Mr. Jefferson's case.

Mr. Thibault's lawyer did not respond to emails seeking comment, but his lawyer's firm provided a statement last year after Republicans singled out Mr. Thibault.

"He firmly believes that any investigation will conclude that his supervision, leadership and decision making were not impacted by political bias or partisanship of any kind," the statement said.

The Office of Special Counsel is investigating whether Mr. Thibault's posts violated the Hatch Act, which prohibits federal employees from engaging in political activities while on the job.

The F.B.I. declined to comment. Mr. Thibault could not be reached for comment.

After focusing on international terrorism from 2018 to 2020, Mr. Thibault returned as a top agent, handling criminal matters at the F.B.I.'s Washington field office.

There he clashed with three agents who served on a public corruption squad that fell under his supervision at an F.B.I. office in Manassas in Northern Virginia. Even before Mr. Thibault's return, the members of the squad had been warned by their supervisor that because of previous troublesome comments by the agents, partisanship was unacceptable.

Under Mr. Thibault, the squad appears to have fractured over how to handle politically fraught cases.

In one instance, he rejected a request to open an investigation into whether Italian satellites had been used to alter votes in favor of President Biden, a conspiracy theory that Mr. Trump peddled, two former law enforcement officials said.

The Justice Department under Mr. Trump also believed the theory was baseless. When the White House pressed the department to investigate, the acting deputy attorney general, Richard P. Donoghue, derided it as "pure insanity."

Mr. Thibault was also connected to another incident that has drawn attention from Republicans.

Before the election, two agents contacted Peter Schweizer, who is the president of the Government Accountability Institute, which has received millions of dollars from prominent conservative donors. Mr. Schweizer also writes for Breitbart, a right-wing news outlet, and had ties to Stephen K. Bannon, a former White House strategist for Mr. Trump.

In an interview, Mr. Schweizer confirmed that the two sought information about Hunter Biden, the president's son, whose foreign business dealings have been the subject of intense Republican scrutiny for years.

Mr. Schweizer had recently published a book, "Profiles in Corruption: Abuse of Power by America's Progressive Elite," delving into the financial dealings of the Biden family. The agents, Mr. Schweizer said, wanted to know if he could share documents related to Hunter Biden's foreign business ties that he might have gathered for his work. Mr. Schweizer said he passed on corporate records and other files.

After The New York Post reported on the younger Mr. Biden's laptop in October 2020, Mr. Schweizer said he informed the F.B.I. agents that he had a copy of the laptop's contents, which were circulating in right-wing circles. But even though the agents had expressed interest, Mr. Schweizer said they never followed up, and in the end, "I never sent anything to them."

The relationship "ended abruptly without any explanation," he added.

The two agents' outreach to Mr. Schweizer caused tension among the F.B.I. officials in Delaware running the case, who had seized the laptop in late 2019 using a grand jury subpoena, the former officials said.

At least one of the agents was instructed by Mr. Thibault to shut down that line of inquiry because of concerns that Mr. Thibault had received in a classified briefing about the possibility of the laptop containing disinformation, one of the former law enforcement officials said.

In a news release, Mr. Grassley accused Mr. Thibault of "improper conduct" in the investigation into Hunter Biden. Mr. Trump, for his part, lashed out on social media, claiming Mr. Thibault had been involved in "hiding and suppressing from the Public and the Media" the "Laptop from Hell," before the 2020 election.





OLIVER CONTRERAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Senator Charles R. Grassley, below left, accused Timothy R. Thibault, above, a veteran F.B.I. agent, of "improper conduct" in investigating the president's son Hunter Biden, below right.

A news release last year denounced Thibault as 'public enemy No. 1.'

In his May 2022 letter to the F.B.I., Mr. Grassley tied Mr. Thibault to Bruce Ohr, a former Justice Department official, and his wife, Nellie Ohr, who were portrayed by Trump supporters as pro-Democratic conspiracy theorists out to destroy Mr. Trump. The three attended a seminar overseas in February 2016. One of the former law enforcement officials said Mr. Thibault did not know the couple.

A person familiar with the matter said one of the agents involved in the outreach to Mr. Schweizer, Thomas Olohan, had drafted a lengthy memo accusing Mr. Thibault of being biased against Mr. Trump. In the memo, Mr. Olohan suggested that the fact that Mr. Thibault and the Ohrs had attended the same seminar was evidence of bias on the part of Mr. Thibault.

The men had clashed after Mr. Thibault learned that Mr. Olohan's daughter — who reports for The Daily Signal, a news site run by the conservative Heritage Foundation — had been writing about someone her father was investigating, two former law enforcement officials said. After Mr. Thibault took him off that case, Mr. Olohan transferred to another criminal squad before retiring last year.

Mr. Olohan now works for the Heritage Foundation, where he is a senior investigative counsel at the group's Oversight Project, according to an internal directory. He did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

In March, the Heritage Foundation sued the Justice Department in federal court seeking F.B.I. records related to Mr. Thibault's communications.

Mr. Trump and his allies have vigorously attacked the F.B.I.'s reasons for opening the Russia investigation, trying to undermine its legitimacy.

And now Mr. Grassley has accused Mr. Thibault of improperly opening an investigation into Mr. Trump and his campaign. Mr. Thibault drafted a memo last spring that began the inquiry into efforts to create slates of electors pledged to Mr. Trump in states he had lost in 2020, according to the former law enforcement officials.

But under a policy established by Mr. Barr's Justice Department in the months before the 2020 election, top F.B.I. and Justice Department officials need to sign off on the memo before investigating any candidate. The rule was meant to avoid influencing the outcome of the race.

Charlie Savage, Luke Broadwater and Jo Becker contributed reporting. Kitty Bennett contributed research.

Outdoor Dining Is Here To Stay in New York City

By EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS

New York City's outdoor dining program, a popular pandemic-era measure designed to be a temporary salve for a devastated restaurant industry, is about to become a permanent part of the city's landscape.

A City Council bill, released on Thursday evening, called for creating a licensing structure that would allow outdoor dining structures to exist in roadways, but only from April through November. Sidewalk cafes would be allowed year-round.

The bill, which is supported by Mayor Eric Adams and still requires the approval of the full Council, aims to strike a balance between retaining a mostly popular program while taking steps to control its outgrowth.

Mr. Adams, a Democrat in his second year in office, said in a statement that outdoor dining had helped restaurants and workers stay afloat at the height of the pandemic and was "here to stay." But he also said that it had "left hundreds of abandoned sheds on our streets that have become havens for rats and eyesores for New Yorkers."

"With this bill, we will create a permanent, year-round outdoor dining program that will support our small businesses, create jobs for New Yorkers, and keep our streets and communities vibrant," he said.

The bill would set forth basic design guidelines that are still to be determined. Some elements of the plan drew immediate criticism, including a provision requiring restaurants in a historic district or at a landmark site to receive approval by the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission for an outdoor dining site — a policy that could affect restaurant-heavy neighborhoods like Greenwich Village and Park Slope, Brooklyn.

Why It Matters

Restaurant owners and diners had been waiting for guidance about what outdoor dining would look like in the future.

The new rules are likely to reduce the current footprint of outdoor dining, which soared to include more than 12,000 restaurants since early in the pandemic. But it is expected to allow for far more outdoor dining options than were in place before 2020.

Restaurants will be required to have a license from the city to offer outdoor dining and to pay fees based on their location and square footage, with higher fees in Manhattan south of 125th Street.

A spokeswoman for the City Council speaker, Adrienne Adams, said in a statement that it was important for the outdoor dining program to be "affordable, equitable and successful" and available in every borough.

Sara Lind, an executive director at Open Plans, a livable streets group, said that she was "relieved and pleased" that the program would become permanent, saying that "New York City's outdoor dining culture has quickly become a fixture of modern city life." But she lamented that outdoor dining in roadways would not be available during the winter.

Background

During the height of the pandemic, the city allowed restaurants to open dining sheds under an emergency order.

Outdoor dining flourished, and many New Yorkers have come to prefer dining al fresco for the atmosphere and as a precaution to avoid getting Covid-19. But the quality of the structures has varied, and some residents have complained bitterly over the loss of parking spots.

The Transportation Department will oversee the permanent outdoor dining program. Restaurants will be allowed to offer outdoor dining from 10 a.m. until midnight, according to the bill.

Sidewalk cafes are regulated separately from roadway cafes. City officials are hoping to expand sidewalk cafes, which were mostly located in Manhattan before the pandemic, and to lower the fees restaurants that operate them have to pay.

What's Next

The City Council is expected to vote on the bill in June.

Famed Chef Spouses Swap Claims of Abuse

By JULIA MOSKIN

The chefs Liz Johnson and Will Aghajanian, partners in business and marriage, have attracted nationwide attention and a celebrity following for their informal, sophisticated cuisine at the Catbird Seat in Nashville, Mimi in New York City and Horses in Los Angeles.

But that notice has spilled over into notoriety this week as sensational and intensely personal allegations lifted from public documents began to make the rounds on the internet. Ms. Johnson has accused Mr. Aghajanian of assaulting her, visiting prostitutes and torturing a number of pet kittens to death. He has accused her of threatening to kill him and deliberately burning him with kitchen implements.

In November, in Los Angeles County Superior Court, Ms. Johnson requested and was granted a temporary restraining order against her husband, ordering him to stay 10 feet away from her at work and 100 yards away from her and their three dogs at all other times.

In January, Mr. Aghajanian responded with a similar request as part of a divorce filing, saying that Ms. Johnson had verbally and physically abused him for years, both at home and in their restaurants. In that filing, he stated that the couple no longer lived together and asked for sole custody of the dogs. A judge denied his request for a restraining order "for lack of sufficient showing of good cause."

In the documents, Ms. Johnson said the staff of the restaurant walked out in November, in protest of her husband's presence in the kitchen; he said she had incited the walkout as part of a calculated plan to remove him from the business.

Since opening in October 2021, Horses has pulled neck-and-neck with Los Angeles celebrity haunts like the Polo Lounge and Jon & Vinny's, with its vintage vibe and a cool-kids clientele that has included Will Ferrell, Beyoncé and Jay-Z, and Maya Rudolph and Paul Thomas Anderson. It has appeared on multiple Best New Restaurant lists and received rave reviews; last year, The New York Times called it "that rare animal in Los Angeles: a hot reservation with serious cooking behind the scenes." (It later came to light that the disgraced restaurateur Ken Friedman was involved in the restaurant.)

After The Los Angeles Times broke the news of the court dispute on Wednesday, a statement was posted on the restaurant's Instagram account, saying that Mr. Aghajanian had left the restaurant last November and that Ms. Johnson was guiding it "to continuously make Horses what she had always intended it to be — A place of joy and celebration."

Mr. Aghajanian denied Ms. Johnson's allegations, and in a statement said, "I have not and have never abused animals, nor my wife." Ms. Johnson said she stood by her accusations.



MARIAH TAUGER/LOS ANGELES TIMES, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Liz Johnson, left, and Will Aghajanian are the married couple behind the celebrity hot spot Horses in Los Angeles. This week, accusations including assault and animal cruelty have surfaced.

Partners who since 2015 have led, and suddenly left, several kitchens.

The couple met in 2011 as interns at Noma, the influential Copenhagen restaurant that plans to close in 2024. Since 2015, they have led — and suddenly left — several kitchens, including those at Mimi, the Catbird Seat, and Freedman's, a modern Jewish deli in Los Angeles, where Ms. Johnson was named one of Food & Wine magazine's Best New Chefs in 2018. (The owners of Mimi and the Catbird Seat did not immediately respond to phone messages seeking comment.)

Last fall, Ms. Johnson announced that she would open a new restaurant in Manhattan, in the West Village space that housed Chumley's, one of the few Prohibition-era speakeasies to survive into the 21st century until it closed in 2020. The future of that project is unclear, but Thomas Carter, who was a consultant on the opening, said Thursday that he was no longer involved. (Mr. Carter faced numerous allegations of abusive workplace behavior in 2018, as a partner in Estela and other Manhattan restaurants with the chef Ignacio Mattos.)

Mr. Friedman did not respond to a request to confirm his involvement in Horses. He co-owned restaurants in New York City and Los Angeles until the New York State attorney general, Letitia James, found that he had sexually harassed 11 employees at the Spotted Pig in Greenwich Village. The restaurant closed in January 2020.

Minnesota Man Is Charged In Theft of 2 Famous Shoes

By MICHAEL LEVENSON

A Minnesota man has been indicted on charges that he stole a pair of the famed ruby slippers worn by Judy Garland in "The Wizard of Oz" from the Judy Garland Museum in Grand Rapids, Minn., the actress's hometown, nearly 18 years ago.

The red-sequined pumps were recovered in a sting operation that ended in Minneapolis in 2018, but the authorities said at the time that their investigation was continuing and they did not name any suspects.

On Tuesday, a federal indictment in U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota charged



RICHARD TSONG-TAATARII/STAR TRIBUNE, VIA A.P.

A pair of Dorothy's ruby slippers from "The Wizard of Oz" were recovered in a 2018 sting.

Terry Jon Martin of Minnesota with stealing an authentic pair of the slippers, which officials estimated have a market value of $3.5 million, from the museum sometime between Aug. 27 and Aug. 28 of 2005. Mr. Martin was indicted on one count of theft of a major artwork.

The one-page indictment did not provide any further details about the case. It was not immediately clear if Mr. Martin had a lawyer and he could not be reached at numbers listed under his name. Mr. Martin told The Minneapolis Star Tribune on Wednesday that he had to go to trial, and added: "I don't want to talk to you." The newspaper reported that Mr. Martin lived about 12 miles south of the museum.

Janie Heitz, executive director of the Judy Garland Museum, said in an interview on Wednesday that she was researching to find out if Mr. Martin had any connection to the museum, although she was certain that he had not been an employee.

"It's a break in the case, which is good," she said. "We are excited, speechless, anxious."

The slippers were stolen by someone who had broken in through a back entrance and smashed the plexiglass display case holding the shoes. With no fingerprints or security camera footage to go by, the police were left with few clues. The only thing left behind was a lone red sequin.

Federal, local and private investigators pursued a variety of theories over the years, and eventually a private donor offered a $1 million reward for locating the shoes, which were among several worn by Garland in filming the 1939 movie. Three other pairs used in filming were known to survive.

A break in the search came in 2018 when someone approached the insurance company that owned the shoes, claiming to have information about the slippers and how they could be returned. It quickly became clear, officials said, that the person was trying to extort money from the company.

Investigators from the F.B.I.'s art crime unit, along with other federal agents in Chicago, Atlanta and Miami, organized a sting operation to recover the slippers. The authorities said they had not paid any reward money.

Seyward Darby, a co-host of "No Place Like Home," a podcast about the theft, said that Mr. Martin's name had not come up in her reporting.

"However, as our podcast discusses, there was a strong suspicion that there was a 'local connection' to the crime — someone with knowledge of the museum, the fact that the slippers were on loan there in the summer of 2005, and how easy they were to steal," Ms. Darby said in an email. "What's interesting is that Martin is just one piece of the puzzle. Over the 13 years the slippers were missing, it is possible — likely, even — that they exchanged hands."

The indictment, Ms. Darby said, raised questions about whether Mr. Martin might have acted alone or whether he might have been commissioned by a criminal syndicate.

"Much like 'The Wizard of Oz' itself, this story keeps on giving," she said. "Every time there's a new development, there are more mysteries."

When the shoes were stolen, they belonged to a collector in North Hollywood, Calif., and were on loan to the museum, which opened in 1975 in the house where Garland lived as a young child.

The Judy Garland Museum had put the shoes on display in 2005 during an annual festival celebrating the actress. Strictly speaking, they are not a pair; the left and right shoes are slightly different sizes, and are considered to be the mates of the left and right shoes housed at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Liberals Balking as Biden Weighs G.O.P.'s Debt Offer

From Page A1

cans' debt ceiling bill — legislation that would slash federal spending by an average of 18 percent over the next decade and is anathema to Democrats. "No more discussion on watering it down," the group tweeted. "Period."

The growing unhappiness in both flanks highlighted how difficult it will be for negotiators to cobble together a debt limit bill that can win the votes to pass both chambers. Lawmakers on both the hard left and right may end up withholding their support, with conservatives arguing that the deal does not go far enough in reducing spending and liberals arguing that it goes too far.

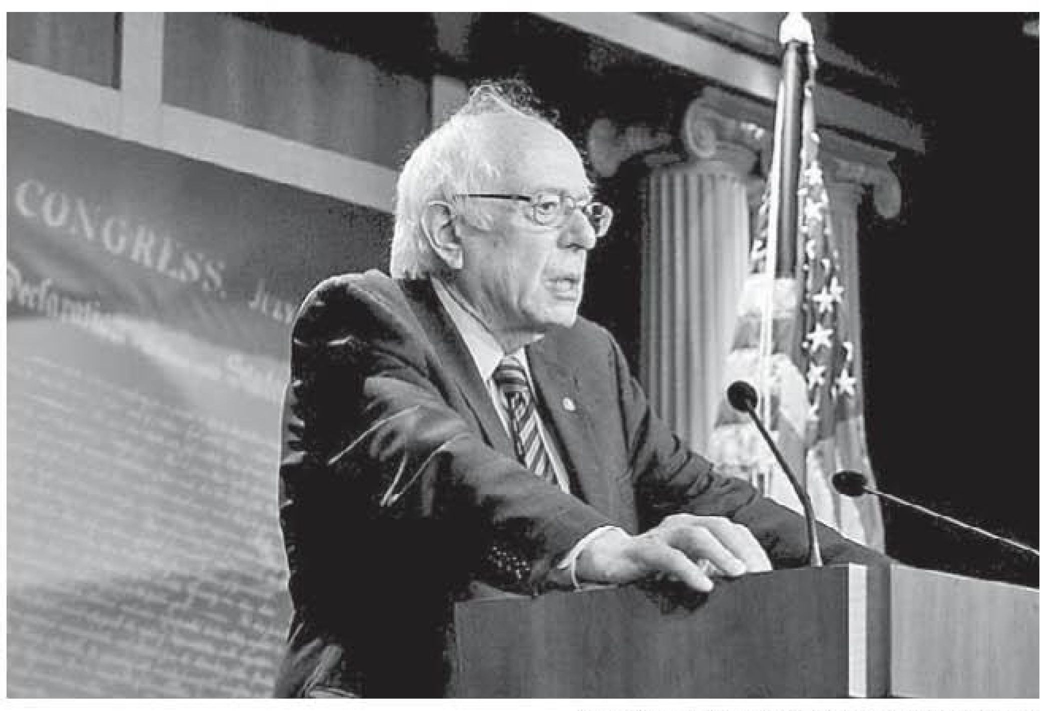
Mr. McCarthy was unusually upbeat on Thursday about the state of the talks, telling reporters that negotiators could reach a deal in principle as early as this weekend.

"We're not there, we haven't agreed to anything yet, but I see the path that we can come to an agreement," he said.

Mr. Biden has repeatedly shown an openness to negotiating with Republicans on work requirements. The president told reporters on Wednesday before he left for Japan that it was "possible" he would accept some G.O.P. proposals on the issue, but that he would not agree to making changes "of any consequence."

"I'm not going to accept any work requirements that's going to have an impact on the medical health needs of people," Mr. Biden said.

Mr. McCarthy has not been precise about what kind of work requirements he would demand, suggesting that he might be willing to narrow the scope of those included in the House Republican bill. Republicans have long pushed for more stringent work requirements, arguing that they lift Americans out of poverty and increase the labor force participation rate, and there has been little in the way of bipartisan consensus on the issue since President Bill Clinton's welfare overhaul.



MICHAEL A. McCOY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont said the Republican bill calling for stricter work requirements for benefits was "absurd."

While no agreements have been reached in the current round of debt talks, work requirements are among the issues negotiators on both sides have agreed to discuss, which also include capping federal spending, clawing back unspent funds allocated to address the coronavirus pandemic and loosening restrictions on domestic energy projects.

On the hard left, a deal cuts too much; on the hard right, it doesn't cut enough.

The bill House Republicans passed in April would make able-bodied adults without dependents who receive food benefits subject to work requirements until they are 55 years old, raising the current age from 49. It would require Medicaid recipients between the ages of 19 and 55 who are able-bodied and do not have dependents to either work, engage in community service or participate in a work-training program for at least 80 hours per month to remain eligible for benefits.

Liberal Democrat dismiss the idea as draconian.

"It's absurd to come up with a proposal that will result in children being thrown off of child care, off of health care, be devastating to elderly people," said Senator Bernie Sanders, independent of Vermont. "We cannot be blackmailed into balancing the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable and leaving the most affluent alone."

Instead, progressives have increasingly rallied around the idea that Mr. Biden should invoke the 14th Amendment, which says that the validity of the United States' public debt "shall not be questioned," to continue issuing new debt to pay bondholders, Social Security recipients, government employees and others even if Congress fails to extend the government's borrowing authority when the limit is reached.

A group of 11 senators led by Mr. Sanders wrote to Mr. Biden on Thursday urging him to "prepare to exercise your authority under the 14th Amendment."

"Republicans' unwillingness to consider one penny in new revenue from the wealthy and large corporations," they wrote, "along with their diminishment of the disastrous consequences of default, have made it seemingly impossible to enact a bipartisan budget deal at this time."

That would amount to a constitutional challenge to the existence of the debt limit, arguing that language in the 14th Amendment overrides the statutory borrowing limit, which currently caps federal debt at $31.4 trillion and requires congressional approval to raise or lift.

If members of his hard-right flank balk at voting for a deal he negotiates, Mr. McCarthy would need Democratic votes to pass the bill in the House.

Russell T. Vought, the former Trump administration budget director who now leads the far-right Center for Renewing America and has become a guru for Freedom Caucus lawmakers, has begun to show signs of unease with the talks. "Any deal that tosses the House's first year cut to '22 spending levels ($150 billion cut to non-defense spending) is unacceptable," he wrote on Twitter.

Democrats, too, threw cold water on the negotiations, saying their side should not compromise given that Republicans would need their votes to pass any final compromise.

"McCarthy has nowhere near the votes for a deal and therefore cannot negotiate debt ceiling," Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Democrat of New York, wrote on Twitter. "You need 218 votes. GOP has maybe ~150. They will need anywhere from 50-100 House Dems to pass anything."

Carl Hulse contributed reporting.

Body Cameras, a Powerful Tool, Are Not Worn by All Police Forces

By SEAN KEENAN

ATLANTA — When the Georgia authorities attempted to clear protesters from forested property near Atlanta in January, to make way for the construction of a $90 million police and fire training facility, a confrontation with a group of activists who deride the project as "Cop City" led to a barrage of gunfire.

One state trooper was wounded, and officers killed a 26-year-old environmental activist named Manuel Esteban Paez Terán. Months later, the shooting remains under investigation, with the activist's friends and relatives disputing the official account that Terán fired first, wounding the trooper.

Investigators, who recently turned evidence about the episode over to a special prosecutor, say the trooper and other members of a law enforcement task force who were near the shooting were not wearing body cameras. The lack of direct video evidence has intensified questions about what happened, and prompted calls for more police agencies to consistently record their actions.

"Why they didn't use cameras, I don't know," said the activist's mother, Belkis Terán, who has called for an investigation of her child's death to be conducted independently of the Georgia authorities. "I don't trust them," she said.

Relatively rare a decade ago, police-worn body cameras have been more widely adopted in the wake of the fatal 2014 police shooting of Michael Brown, 18, in Ferguson, Mo. In some cases, police forces began using them as a result of federal civil rights investigations. Over the last decade, they have become an important tool both for police investigations and for efforts to hold law enforcement agencies accountable for misconduct.

"You're introducing a level of evidence that is able to produce a better outcome," said Volkan Topalli, a criminology professor at Georgia State University. Professor Topalli has contributed to a body of research indicating that, compared with police departments that do not use the cameras, those that do face fewer public complaints, and their investigators clear more cases.

A dramatic example of the cameras' impact occurred less than two weeks before the shooting outside Atlanta in January, when body cameras and other surveillance video captured images of police officers in Memphis beating Tyre Nichols, 29, who later died from his injuries. The footage led to several firings, and five officers were charged with murder.

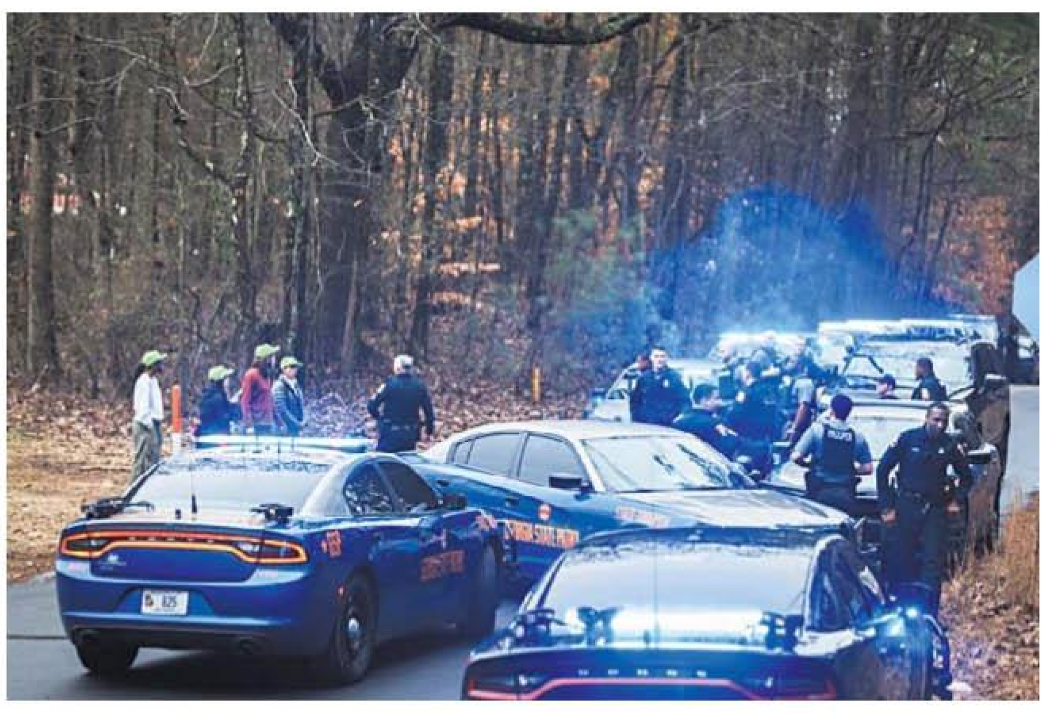
The rapid adoption of body cameras, especially by departments in many of America's largest cities, has led to a greater expectation by the public that law enforcement actions will be caught on camera — and greater suspicion when they are not. Several city police chiefs recently pushed the Justice Department to allow the release of footage from cameras worn by local officers serving on federal task forces, saying the step was needed to fulfill public expectations of transparency.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DUSTIN CHAMBERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Above, a vigil in Atlanta after Manuel Esteban Paez Terán, an activist who opposed construction of a police and fire training facility in a forest outside the city, below left, was fatally shot by police officers in January. The officers were not wearing body cameras.





Still, the use of body cameras continues to vary widely, and only seven states have enacted requirements for them, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

In Georgia, the police chiefs association reported that nearly 90 percent of the 254 local agencies it surveyed in 2021 were using body cameras in some fashion. But the Georgia State Patrol, with nearly 800 troopers, does not routinely equip its officers with them, relying instead on dashboard cameras. Nor does the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, which was part of the forest-clearing task force and led the investigation of Terán's death.

Because most troopers operate primarily from their vehicles, only three Georgia State Patrol units — those at the State Capitol and the tourist destination of Jekyll Island, and a motorcycle unit in metropolitan Atlanta — currently use body cameras, according to Courtney Floyd, a spokeswoman for the agency. "Every marked patrol car has a permanently mounted, in-car dash camera," she said.

Some other state police forces share that policy, said John Bagnardi, executive director of the American Association of State Troopers. Although his organization does not track body camera use, he said, "I know some states prefer the dash cameras, as much of their work is performed in and around the vehicle."

In the wake of the Terán shooting, Democratic legislators in Georgia proposed requiring body cameras for all law enforcement officers in the state, but the bill failed to reach the floor for a vote. State Representative Sandra Scott, one of the bill's sponsors, said opposition to the bill stemmed from a desire to shield police forces from accountability. "We still have officers that are doing things they should not be doing," she said.

But the Georgia Sheriffs' Association, which helped block the proposal, said it was opposed to requiring agencies to use body cameras without providing money for them. The cameras can cost about $1,000 apiece to buy, plus expenses for maintenance and video storage, and cost is a common concern cited by agencies that have not yet adopted them.

Some critics of the police say that body cameras have done little to curb misconduct. "Police are willing to kill on camera," said Micah Herskind, a policy associate at the Southern Center for Human Rights, citing the recent deaths of Mr. Nichols in Memphis, George Floyd in Minneapolis and Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta, all of which were recorded.

Even experts who support the use of body cameras caution that the footage can sometimes be misleading or subject to varying interpretations. "People disagree about policing, and will continue to disagree about exactly what a video shows," Seth W. Stoughton, a University of South Carolina law professor and former police officer, told The New York Times for a 2016 video investigation.

The January incident outside Atlanta occurred in the South River Forest in DeKalb County, where the city plans to build an 85-acre training center on land it owns. The project has prompted months of intense protests from activists who want to preserve the nearly 400-acre forest, and who oppose what they call the further militarization of policing.

Investigators have said that officers from the forest-clearing task force tried to order Terán out of a tent in the forest, and then the activist shot a state trooper, prompting other officers to return fire. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation has said that gunshot residue was found on the activist's hands, and records indicate that Terán had purchased the firearm used to shoot the trooper.

But members of the activist's family maintain that Terán, who was nonbinary and was known among the forest activists as Tortuguita, or Little Turtle, was a pacifist. The family commissioned its own autopsy, which found that Terán was shot while sitting cross-legged, with hands raised. The family's autopsy found no trace of gunshot residue, and neither did an official autopsy conducted by the medical examiner in DeKalb County, which indicated that Terán sustained at least 57 gunshot wounds.

Though investigators say no video images of the shooting were captured on camera, audio was. Footage released by the Atlanta Police Department, whose officers wear body cameras and were in a different part of the forest, includes the sounds of distant gunfire and the voices of officers discussing friendly fire. Activists have seized on the exchange, suggesting that troopers had wounded one of their own.

In a statement after the footage was released, the state bureau acknowledged that "at least one statement exists where an officer speculates that the trooper was shot by another officer in crossfire." But it added: "Speculation is not evidence. Our investigation does not support that statement."

The bureau turned the case over last month to a special prosecutor, George Christian, the district attorney for the Mountain Judicial Circuit in northeast Georgia. In a statement this week, Mr. Christian said he was working to determine "whether or not the use of lethal force was authorized," and had not finished reviewing the evidence. He did not say when he would reach a decision.

South Carolina Searching For Inmate Released Early

By RICK ROJAS

Jeriod Price had served more than half of a 35-year prison sentence for murdering another man at a nightclub in 2002. Then, last month, he became a fugitive. The authorities in South Carolina warned the public that he was dangerous and "could be anywhere in the world," pleading for information that could aid their sudden, frantic search.

"My prayer, my plea, to someone out there," Leon Lott, the sheriff in Richland County, S.C., said in early April, standing next to an oversize $5,000 reward check: "Help us."

Mr. Price had not escaped. A prominent judge, just a day before his own retirement, had signed and then sealed an order clearing the way for Mr. Price's release from prison in March, even though he still had some 16 years remaining on his sentence.

A month later, the South Carolina Supreme Court overruled the judge's order. Mr. Price failed to surrender, setting off a manhunt with officers from law enforcement agencies combing the state and beyond.

The judge's order, later unsealed, justified Mr. Price's early release by citing assistance he had provided to corrections officials, including tipping them off to a high-profile inmate's escape. Mr. Price's lawyer said the furtive nature of the process was meant to shield him from retribution.

But law enforcement officials and the family of the man Mr. Price was convicted of murdering in 2002 said they were blindsided by what they have condemned as a deeply suspicious and entirely undeserved deal.

"He's a coldblooded murderer, and he's a well-connected coldblooded murderer," said David Pascoe, who prosecuted Mr. Price for the killing of Carl Smalls Jr., a college football player, at a nightclub in Columbia. "He's not the type of person we need out on our streets, that's for sure."

In South Carolina, the dizzying sequence of events has drawn intense scrutiny of early release deals for inmates.

Last month, Gov. Henry McMaster urged state corrections officials to look for any similar early release orders from the past year, trying to determine just how unusual Mr. Price's case was. In a letter requesting the review, Mr. McMaster, a Republican, assailed Mr. Price's release as "seemingly contrary to law and obviously at odds with common sense."

The Department of Corrections found at least 26 other instances since the beginning of last year in which sentences were reduced. In seven other cases, a judge's order led to the inmate's immediate release from prison.

Besides Mr. Price, only one other convicted murderer was immediately released, having served 27 years of what was originally a life sentence.

"This report highlights the need for tougher criminal penalties and confirms the General Assembly needs to act to close the revolving door on violent offenders and crack down on career criminals and illegal guns," Brandon Charochak, a spokesman for the governor, said in a statement.

The now-retired judge who signed the release order, Casey Manning, did not respond to a message seeking comment and has not spoken publicly about his decision. But last week, the South Carolina Judicial Branch issued a memorandum emphasizing that a state law allows for early release in certain circumstances. "The sentence reduction in the Price case offended the sensibilities of some," it said, "but it must be remembered that sentence reductions are by request of the state. Judges don't make the law, their job is to apply it."

The backlash to Mr. Price's release has a political dimension because Mr. Price's lawyer, Todd Rutherford, is the Democratic leader in the Republican-controlled State House of Representatives and serves on a legislative committee that plays a powerful role in determining who becomes a state judge. South Carolina is one of only two states where the legislature selects judges; the other is Virginia.



ERIK CAMPOS/THE STATE/TNS, VIA ABACA PRESS

Jeriod Price was freed from prison, where he was serving a 35-year sentence, but then authorities overturned his early release. He's now at large.

Like Mr. Rutherford, many of the lawmakers on the committee are also practicing lawyers — a setup that, critics argue, creates a conflict of interest. The critics have seized on Mr. Price's release deal in their push to overhaul the state's judicial selection process.

The search for Mr. Price, 43, began after the South Carolina Supreme Court demanded his return to custody on April 26. But he had been released on March 15 and did not leave much of a trail for investigators to follow. He obtained a driver's license on April 7 and gave an address in Florence, S.C., about 80 miles from Columbia, officials said.

Mr. Price's name and face have been splashed across television, social media, newspaper pages and electronic roadside billboards in Columbia. Last week, the authorities announced a significantly larger reward, $30,000, for information leading to his arrest.

"We're a little behind, but we'll catch up," Mr. Lott, the sheriff, said in a recent news conference.

Mr. Rutherford, Mr. Price's longtime lawyer, has publicly encouraged his client to turn himself in. Still, in an interview, Mr. Rutherford said that the exposure the case has received has imperiled Mr. Price, particularly if he returns to prison. "We have labeled him a snitch for the entire world to see," he said.

Mr. Price was sentenced in 2003 to 35 years for the fatal shooting of Mr. Smalls, a 22-year-old defensive tackle for the University of North Carolina, in what the authorities said was a gang-related skirmish. Mr. Price did not dispute shooting Mr. Smalls but argued that he was defending himself. Another man was also convicted in the murder.

The process surrounding Mr. Price's release remains murky.

In December, Judge Manning was being toasted at parties and given one of the state's highest honors, the Order of the Palmetto, as he had reached the required retirement age of 72.

Still, in his final days on the bench, Judge Manning met in his chambers with Mr. Rutherford and Byron Gipson, the chief prosecuting attorney for the Columbia judicial circuit, where the judge agreed to an order — dated Dec. 30 — that would reduce Mr. Price's sentence to the 19 years he had already served, according to lawyers and court documents.

The order cited an account of Mr. Price intervening as a corrections officer was being pummeled by inmates, with one preparing to stab the officer. It cited another account of Mr. Price tackling an inmate who was about to hit a corrections officer with a broom.

It also referred to Mr. Price alerting prison officials to the 2017 escape of Jimmy Lee Causey, who had been convicted of the kidnapping and armed robbery of his former lawyer.

One morning in March, Carl Smalls Sr., whose son Mr. Price was convicted of killing, was called by a corrections employee who broke the news: Mr. Price was being released that day. Mr. Smalls and his wife were stunned.

"That just turned everything all over again," he said in a news conference.

The Smalls family told Mr. Pascoe, who is now the chief prosecutor for a region southeast of Columbia, who was shocked and infuriated. He contacted the state's attorney general, Alan Wilson, and reporters for The State and for The Post and Courier, two of the state's largest newspapers.

South Carolina, like other states, has a law allowing for the early release of inmates who give substantial information helping law enforcement or corrections officials. But when the Price case reached the State Supreme Court, some of the justices expressed bewilderment, saying that the process had skirted the proper procedures and had involved a surprising level of secrecy.

"We have a sealed order with no hearing to seal it," Justice John W. Kittredge said during oral arguments. "It was never filed. Who knew it? Who could file an appeal? It's a phantom order."

In a statement, Mr. Gipson said there had been no motion filed by his office because the order had been issued before he had a chance to move ahead with the motion, which prevented a public hearing from being held. Mr. Rutherford said that otherwise, the order met the standard set by law.

Mr. Pascoe has challenged the contents of the order; Mr. Price, he said, was a "huge menace" as an inmate. Prison records showed that Mr. Price was sanctioned multiple times for gang-related activity, leading to stints of 90 days or longer in disciplinary detention and the loss of phone, visitation and canteen privileges.

Starting in 2017, he was sent several times to a prison in New Mexico for extended stretches, including for the last two years before his release.

Mr. Pascoe also said that the claims of Mr. Price protecting corrections officers were based on flimsy accounts, including from another inmate who is now dead. Handling his release in such a covert way, he said, came with consequences, particularly for the Smalls family.

"This was all a sham," Mr. Pascoe said. "Worse than that, it was a secret."

In New York City, Outrage Over Plans for Housing Migrants

From Page A1

far, and may cost as much as $4.3 billion through June 2024, according to Ms. Williams-Isom. It has strained Mr. Adams's relationship with not only New Yorkers but with President Biden.

Last week, thousands of migrants converged on the border ahead of Title 42's end, but crossings have been significantly down in the past week. Border officials are still processing migrants who have been in custody for days; as of Wednesday, the Border Patrol was holding migrants in custody for about four-and-a-half days, on average. More than 3,800 migrants were released on Wednesday with an immigration court summons.

Mr. Biden has been criticized over his response to immigration by Republicans and Democrats alike in recent weeks, including by Mr. Adams, who said last month that the president had "failed" the city. The Biden administration has moved to restrict the flow of migrants, with new limits on who can apply for asylum in the United States. That would make it all but impossible for many people to qualify if they hadn't applied for asylum elsewhere.

The arrival of migrants has tested left-leaning cities around the country in particular. In addition to New York, many of the migrants are ending up in places like Chicago, Denver and Washington, D.C., where leaders have sought to emphasize that they are welcome, while at the same time warning that the large numbers of newcomers are straining services.

The main destination for many people who are crossing continues to be New York City. One shelter in Laredo, Texas, was filled last week with Venezuelans, who have made up a significant number of the people coming to the city since last year. Some said they were attracted to the city because they had friends or relatives there.

A few were also aware that the city would guarantee them shelter. (Unlike other large cities, New York is required to give anyone who asks for shelter a place to stay, a guarantee based on decades of court cases.)

Migrants have come in a variety of ways, some with tickets they purchased themselves or with the help of nonprofits, some on buses chartered by other American cities or the state of Texas, and in recent weeks, more are coming via airplane.

For Mr. Adams, the new arrivals have opened a fresh front in the public relations crisis over migrants, as public school parents led a series of protests over the use of school gyms this week. By Wednesday evening, migrants were moved out of a handful of gyms where they had been staying, mostly located in Brooklyn, though the city said that the plan to use about 20 gyms could be revived as needed for temporary overflow.

But Mr. Adams also threw up his hands at the seemingly endless merry-go-round of proposals, outcries and pivots. "Whomever is telling us not to go somewhere, I have one question for you: You tell me where we should go," Mr. Adams said on Wednesday.

"The number one question I'm asking everyone now," the mayor continued, "Did you go to Washington to get us more money? What have you done for the migrants? And where would you like for me to house them?"

Ms. Williams-Isom, the deputy mayor, told reporters that the city was facing a serious humanitarian crisis and needed New Yorkers to come together in a spirit of cooperation and problem solving, not armchair quarterbacking.

"We have seen too many criticisms couched in half truths," she said. "We are looking for constructive, real suggestions, not idle talking points."

She said that the city was running out of options and that its shelter capacity was full, which had forced it to turn to temporary options like gyms and "large open spaces."

On Tuesday, protesters gathered outside P.S. 172 in Brooklyn, one of the schools whose gym was designated as emergency housing for migrants. Some protesters arrived as early as 3 a.m., when they believed migrants might begin to arrive.

Gabriela Vizhnag, 50, the mother of a third grader, said she was "not racist or anti-immigrant" because she herself immigrated from Mexico. But she opposed the plan to house people in a school gym with no available showers and only two bathrooms.

"It is not good for the children and it is not humane for the migrants," she said.

A group of migrants from Venezuela watched the protest from a shelter across the street. One, María Briseño, 38, said she understood why parents were upset.

"Schools should be for children and the city should make an effort to house migrants in other places," said Ms. Briseño, who came to the United States seven months ago with her husband and two children, who now attend another nearby public school.

Ms. Williams-Isom said the city had requested assistance from mayors and county executives across the state, but when asked by reporters about specific proposals or which municipalities the city had asked for help, she declined to provide details. Instead, she repeatedly said that the city was at the end of its rope. The city applied for $350 million in federal aid, but will receive about $30 million, city officials have said.

"What I want New Yorkers to really understand in this moment is that we are in an emergency and we are at a breaking point in the system," she said, when asked if the city would house migrants in vacant office spaces.

Activists and legal groups have called on the city to focus on helping people find permanent housing, but New York is in the grip of a long-running housing crisis, and its voucher program has been plagued with troubles.

On Wednesday, the Brooklyn borough president, Antonio Reynoso, called on the mayor, the New York City Council and Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Democrat, to take legal action to make thousands of unlisted vacant apartments available for New Yorkers living in shelters, a move he said would free up shelter space for migrants.

Speaking in Harlem on Wednesday, Mr. Adams appeared exasperated by having to explain to New Yorkers that the influx of migrants had created a crisis in the city. He said the city had, in some ways, been a victim of its own success.

"One of the biggest impediments to resolving this issue is that people have not really accepted the fact that this is a crisis," the mayor said. "Because we have managed it well, people have the belief, 'Well it can't be that bad.' No, it's bad."

The mayor said the city was expecting 13 to 15 busloads of migrants in the next several days.

Mr. Adams said that housing migrants at hotels had broader implications for the city, beyond just the cost of putting them up.

"Instead of monies coming from people who are visiting us and spending in our tourism, in our Broadway plays, instead of them using those hotels, we're using those hotels," Mr. Adams said.

He then tried to emphasize the seriousness of the situation by explaining that half the hotels in the city were occupied by asylum seekers, a figure that turned out to be inaccurate. The Hotel and Gaming Trades Council, which represents workers at hotels with 70 percent of the city's rooms, said about 3,500 rooms were being used to house asylum seekers. There are between 125,000 and 130,000 hotel rooms in the city, it said.

City officials later clarified that 40 percent of the hotels suitable to house migrants had been booked. Advocates have said that means that hotels should still be an option.

"I'm worried they want to use temporary circumstances that will garner public outcry as a way of nudging Washington," said Shelly Nortz, deputy executive director for policy for the Coalition for the Homeless. "It wouldn't be the first time public officials made shelter an unattractive option to send a message to other officials or the migrants themselves."

Most arriving migrants have said that they were eager to find work; they can become eligible to work legally if they apply for asylum. The process can take a long time, however, so many are finding jobs to support themselves in the underground economy instead.

Marisol Moreno, 55, came to New York six months ago, and has been living in the Holiday Inn in the Financial District for two months. She said she felt "so grateful that this city has supported me and allowed me to stay here."

She said she also empathized with exasperated city officials and even those who might be unhappy with the arrival of migrants, because her native country, Ecuador, had struggled to provide for migrants fleeing Venezuela.

"I get it. It's terribly hard for a country or a state to admit thousands of immigrants. It's a heavy burden," Ms. Moreno said. "But I believe in us as well, as immigrants. I believe that if we put our heads together, work hard, we can create something worthy here in the United States."

Reporting was contributed by Wesley Parnell, Raúl Vilchis, Eileen Sullivan and Karen Zraick.



A cellphone image of cots set up inside Public School 172's gym in Brooklyn for use by migrants.



BRITTAINY NEWMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Amy Caldron, a fifth grader at P.S. 172. The city began housing migrants in school gyms last week.



JUAN ARREDONDO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A daily stream of migrants feeding the crisis has doubled in recent weeks, city officials said.

New Rule Would Ban Trash Bags To Curb Rats

By EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS

In the latest front in New York City's fight against the proliferation of trash and rats, city officials plan to require restaurants and bodegas to set out trash in containers instead of bags.

The rule, which will be formally proposed on Thursday, could apply to 40,000 food-related businesses — roughly 20 percent of businesses in the city — covering "everything from Dunkin' Donuts to Tavern on the Green," the city's sanitation commissioner, Jessica Tisch, said in an interview.

The move would address one of New York's ubiquitous, age-old eyesores: the heaps of smelly trash bags filled with restaurant food scraps and liquids that remain at curbside for hours at night, providing easy targets for rats until commercial haulers arrive.

"We want people to understand that bags on the street attract rats, and we need everyone to do their part — residents, businesses and the city — to get the black bags of rat food off the streets," Ms. Tisch said.

The rule would apply to a wide range of businesses that produce most of the city's food waste: catering companies, food manufacturers, restaurants, food wholesalers and retail food stores. They would be required to put trash at the curb in "rigid receptacles with tight-fitting lids."

Why It Matters

The new rule is part of the city's broader plan to move trash into containers, a simple yet revolutionary change in New Yorkers' trash habits. To do so could easily cost the city hundreds of millions of dollars over the next decade. City officials must buy new specialized trash trucks and stationary containers, while also increasing the frequency of residential trash collection in large swaths of the city.

Other cities like Barcelona, Buenos Aires and Singapore have already embraced trash containerization.

New York City is notorious for allowing towers of foul-smelling trash bags to line the streets. Currently, many restaurants and bodegas set trash out in bags at 8 p.m., and they can sit there for hours before private carting companies take them away.

Mayor Eric Adams's new rat czar, Kathleen Corradi, said last month that she would focus on reducing the presence of food waste, a move that scientists say would do the most to control the rat population.

Background

Earlier this month, the Adams administration announced an ambitious plan to move toward containerization.

City officials found that it was possible to use trash containers on 89 percent of the city's residential streets, but it would require removing 150,000 parking spots — more spots than were taken for outdoor dining or the city's popular bike-share program.

To test out the idea, the city is starting a new pilot program this fall in West Harlem that will install large shared trash containers in parking spots on up to 10 residential blocks and at more than a dozen schools.

What's Next

The Sanitation Department will hold a public hearing on June 22 about the proposal for food-related businesses to use containers. The rule could take effect as early as July.

Digital Imaging Project of the Titanic Shows the Shipwreck in Stunning Detail

By APRIL RUBIN

An ambitious digital imaging project has produced what researchers describe as a "digital twin" of the R.M.S. Titanic, showing the wreckage of the doomed ocean liner with a level of detail that has never been captured before.

The project, undertaken by Magellan Ltd., a deepwater seabed mapping company, yielded more than 16 terabytes of data, 715,000 still images and a high-resolution video. The visuals were captured over the course of a six-week expedition in the summer of 2022, nearly 2.4 miles below the surface of the North Atlantic, Atlantic Productions, which is working on a documentary about the project, said in a news release.

The researchers used two submersibles, named Romeo and Juliet, to map "every millimeter" of the wreckage as well as the entire three-mile debris field. Creating the model, which shows the ship lying on the ocean floor and the area around it, took about eight months, said Anthony Geffen, the chief executive and creative director of Atlantic Productions.

"We're now going to write the proper science of the Titanic," he said.

Previous images of the wreckage, which was found less than 400 miles off the coast of Newfoundland in 1985, suffered from low light and murky water. The new images have effectively removed the ocean water, allowing the wreckage to be viewed in "extraordinary detail," Atlantic Productions said, noting that a serial number can be seen on a propeller.

> Creating the model took researchers about eight months.

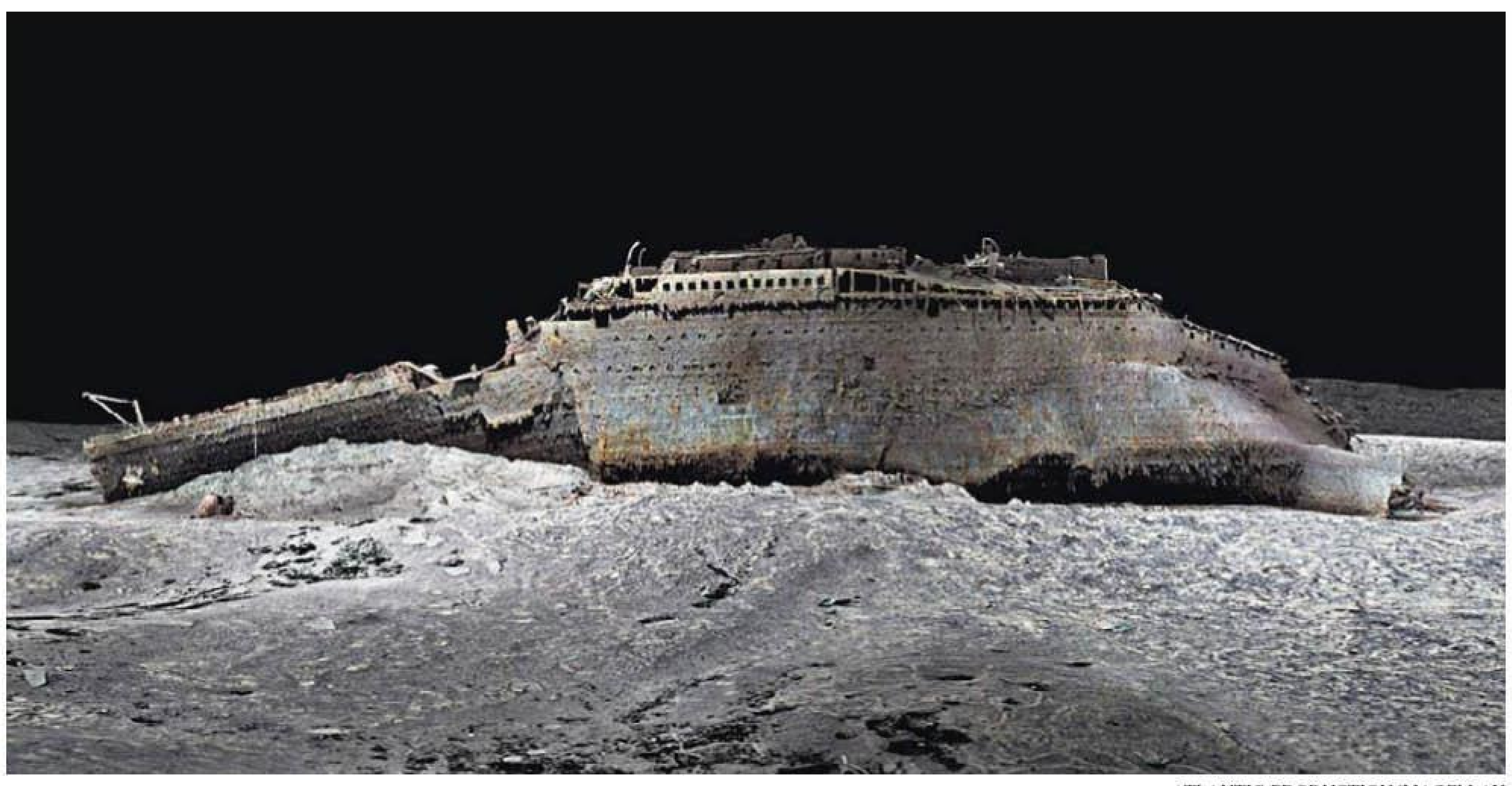
The Titanic, the largest passenger ship built at the time, sank on April 15, 1912, after hitting an iceberg on its maiden voyage. Many details of the disaster, in which more than 1,500 people perished, have remained a mystery ever since.

The models offer new details about the shipwreck that hadn't previously been known, Mr. Geffen said. For example, he said, one of the lifeboats was blocked by a jammed metal piece and couldn't be deployed.

The submersibles captured images of personal artifacts, such as watches, top hats and unopened champagne bottles, that were strewn across the debris field. Experts hope they will be able to match personal items to Titanic passengers using artificial intelligence, Mr. Geffen said. He added that people someday would also be able to witness the shipwreck through virtual reality and augmented reality.

"In accordance with tight regulations in place, the wreck was not touched or disturbed," Atlantic Productions said, adding that the site was treated "with the utmost of respect, which included a flower-laying ceremony in memory of those who lost their lives."

"This was a challenging mission," Richard Parkinson, Magellan's founder and chief executive, said in a statement. "In the middle of the Atlantic we had to fight the elements, bad weather and technical challenges to carry out this unprecedented mapping and digitalization operation of the Titanic."



ATLANTIC PRODUCTION/MAGELLAN

The new visuals were captured over the course of a six-week expedition in the summer of 2022.

Famous Central Park Hawk Is Said to Have Died at 32, But Some Birders Doubt It

By DODAI STEWART

Pale Male, a red-tailed hawk who took up residence on the ledge of a ritzy Manhattan apartment building 30 years ago, became the subject of hundreds of newspaper articles, at least three books and an award-winning documentary film and counted Mary Tyler Moore among his fans, was pronounced dead on Tuesday evening.

Almost immediately, some of the city's birders began to ask: Was it really the same hawk — after all those years?

Pale Male, an apex predator living in the most populated city in the United States, was the original New York City celebrity bird, predating Barry the barred owl, the "hot" Mandarin duck and Flaco the eagle-owl.

He was named for his light-colored feathers by Marie Winn, a birder and longtime columnist for The Wall Street Journal, who followed his progress in print for over a decade and penned a book about him in 1999, "Red-Tails in Love," making him something of a local celebrity.

Was the sickly bird the same that stole the spotlight in 2004?

But in 2004 Pale Male stepped into the national spotlight when the co-op board of 927 Fifth Avenue, where he had settled in 1993, decided to evict the hawk and his mate from their nest on the prewar building's facade. An uproar ensued.

New York City Audubon got involved; birders and building residents rallied. Ms. Moore, who had lived in the building since 1989, appeared on national television, declaring the destruction of the birds' home "pointless and heartless." The nest was successfully reinstalled.

With such a visible presence in New York City, Pale Male became an ambassador for urban wildlife. He attracted a crowd of humans with binoculars who would stand on Fifth Avenue and watch as he flew, fed, mated and tended to his chicks.

On Monday afternoon, a park ranger found a sick red-tailed hawk on the ground in Central Park, near East 79th Street and Fifth Avenue. Bobby Horvath, a wildlife rehabilitation expert who specializes in raptor care, was contacted.

Mr. Horvath took the hawk home and gave him antibiotics, some meat and fluids. "We got a small meal into him actually," Mr. Horvath said. But the bird did not make it through the night.

Pale Male had never been banded and had no identifying tag. If the hawk was indeed Pale Male, he had lived to be over 32 years old.

A red-tailed hawk's average life span is about 20 years. Which means either Pale Male was truly one extraordinary bird — or Pale Male wasn't Pale Male at all.

Jessica Wilson, the executive director of New York City Audubon, became a Pale Male fan in the 1990s. "He was just so much fun to watch," she said.

The bird authorities she had spoken to, she said, told her the dead hawk was Pale Male. "Even though it's unusual — it's a long life — there's enough evidence collected, that experts think, suspect, that it's been him this whole time," she said.

Paul Sweet, the collection manager in the American Museum of Natural History's ornithology department, said he was "agnostic" about whether the bird was indeed Pale Male, but if it was, "it would be kind of a miracle."

But he added, "Once you start giving birds names, they sort of take on a life of their own."

Gabriel Willow, a freelance naturalist who leads bird walks in Central Park, noted that Pale Male's diet could have contributed to his longevity: "He did have a known predilection for eating baby birds" — which meant he was not only subsisting on possibly poisoned rats.

But Mr. Willow had doubts whether the bird in question was Pale Male: "It seems unlikely to me that the most famous red-tailed hawk of all time would also be the longest lived."

A bird's appearance can change after molting. And a hawk can pass on certain attributes — like pale feathers — to its offspring, of which Pale Male had plenty.

Ben Young, an educator, amateur naturalist and wildlife enthusiast, said Pale Male was a prolific breeder with "Shakespearean levels of progeny" — eight generations of offspring, with several partners — and he did not believe the dead hawk was the original. "Pale Male has been dead," he said, "probably for a decade."

"The activism around him was super inspiring," Mr. Young added. "People coming together and saying, 'We need to make space for wild things to live in our city,' is just awesome. But I don't think this is him."

All the experts agreed that if the bird was the original Pale Male, he had avoided an onslaught of threats, from window collisions to ingesting rat poison to merely outlasting the usual life expectancy.

As for Mr. Horvath, he said he believed the bird — whose corpse was in his freezer on Wednesday — was Pale Male.

"I have to go along with, you know, the hawk people who I know and I rely on," Mr. Horvath said. "And I trust them."

Mr. Willow was ultimately philosophical: "I think what's meaningful about Pale Male is the way he captured the public imagination. And as such, it doesn't matter if it was Pale Male or not at the end of the day."



JULIE JACOBSON/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pale Male leaving his nest with a rat he just caught hanging from his beak, in 2005. He nested above Fifth Avenue for decades.

Corrections

FRONT PAGE

An article on Sunday about hundreds of people who starved to death in Kenya after following the teachings of a pastor preaching End Times mischaracterized the Book of Revelation. It is a book, not a chapter, of the New Testament.

NATIONAL

An article on Wednesday about the former Fox News host Tucker Carlson and his role in bringing right-wing ideas to mainstream audiences described incorrectly the organization Check My Ads. It is a nonprofit watchdog, not a consultancy.

ARTS

A theater review on Wednesday about the play "King James" misidentified the character who works at his family's furniture store in 2014. It is Shawn, not Matt.

OBITUARIES

A headline with an obituary on Thursday about the Nobel-winning economist Robert E. Lucas Jr. misstated his age. As the obituary correctly stated, he was 85, not 65.

Contact the Newsroom
To contact the newsroom regarding correction requests, please email corrections@nytimes.com.

Errors are corrected during the press run whenever possible, so some errors noted here may not have appeared in all editions.

R.S.V. Vaccine for Infants Is Closer to Approval

By CHRISTINA JEWETT

An advisory panel to the Food and Drug Administration voted on Thursday in favor of approving a vaccine by Pfizer to prevent the severe respiratory virus that is a potentially deadly threat to infants.

The vaccine would be the first to protect babies from respiratory syncytial virus, or R.S.V., which is the reason many infants are admitted to children's hospitals each year and kills several hundred under 5 each year.

Fourteen agency advisers unanimously agreed that the vaccine was effective, and the F.D.A. typically follows the recommendations of its advisory panels.

Ten of the 14 agreed that the vaccine was safe, with some airing concerns about elevated rates — not all statistically significant — of preterm births among mothers who got the vaccine compared to those who received a placebo.

The vote follows the F.D.A.'s earlier decision to approve the first R.S.V. vaccine for older adults in the United States. Several other options are still being evaluated.

The Pfizer vaccine for pregnant women, called Abrysvo, is being reviewed ahead of another option submitted to the F.D.A. that would be given to infants — a monoclonal antibody shot meant to provide five months of protection.

R.S.V. is a common ailment that is most severe in young infants and older adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, up to 80,000 children younger than 5 are hospitalized with the virus each year and up to 300 die. (As many as 160,000 adults 65 and older are hospitalized each year with the virus, and about 10,000 die.)

The youngest infants face the greatest risk. Data presented at the meeting showed that infants 6 months or younger were twice as likely to be hospitalized compared with older babies or children. Efforts to test a vaccine in infants began in the 1960s but were abandoned when the vaccine caused more severe cases, said Dr. Bill Gruber, the head of clinical vaccine research and development at Pfizer.



ALEX KORMANN/STAR TRIBUNE, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Infants 6 months or younger are twice as likely as older children to be hospitalized with respiratory syncytial virus, data shows.

The prospect of having a large number of babies immunized in the fall, before the winter when R.S.V. rates are typically highest, would be "huge," said Dr. Jonathan Miller, a pediatrician who sees children in the clinic and hospital for Nemours Children's Health, Delaware Valley.

"I'm thrilled about the prospect of this, as well as about the prospect of other R.S.V. vaccines in the pipeline," said Dr. Miller, who is not an adviser to the agency. "This looks as if it will be the first one coming our way, and it's a long time coming."

A shot administered to pregnant women may protect their babies.

The vaccine under review Thursday was tested in about 7,300 women after the 24th week of pregnancy. About half received a placebo, and half were given the vaccine as a shot. For the first 90 days after birth, six infants in the vaccination group had a serious case of R.S.V., compared with 33 in the placebo group, translating to an efficacy of nearly 82 percent.

The study, published in The New England Journal of Medicine, showed that for six months after birth, the vaccine was 69 percent effective. In the treatment group, 19 babies fell seriously ill compared to 62 in the placebo group.

The main safety concern during the hearing was whether the vaccine was linked to preterm birth, a safety signal that led GSK to halt its trial of a similar R.S.V. vaccine that was being tested in pregnant patients, according to Dr. Hal Barron, a former company executive. The F.D.A. approved that vaccine, called Arexvy, for older adults earlier this month. (Like GSK, Pfizer tested the same vaccine formula in older adults and infants.)

"We quickly halted the trial based on it confirming that the signal was real," Dr. Barron said in a March 2022 presentation to investors, "but we are still puzzled as to exactly why this occurred."

The label for the GSK vaccine says that in tests of pregnant women, 6.8 percent receiving the treatment had preterm births, compared to 5 percent in the placebo group.

In the Pfizer study, premature delivery was reported in 5.6 percent of the pregnancies in the treatment group, compared with 4.7 percent in the placebo group. Officials at the F.D.A. reported that the difference was not statistically significant.

Pfizer said if the drug were approved, the company would conduct a post-approval study of real-world use of the vaccine, monitoring health records for the incidence of preterm birth and other possible problems. Agency advisers, though, expressed skepticism about a plan to use data generated from health care billing records to monitor vaccine safety. Several noted that such data could make it hard to link a parent who got the vaccine to the child.

"I do feel like we should be setting the bar higher for review," said one adviser, Dr. Amanda Cohn, the director of the division of birth defects and infant disorders at the C.D.C., adding that more data might help clarify questions about the effects on preterm birth.

Dr. Hana El Sahly, the advisory committee chairwoman and professor of virology at Baylor College of Medicine, said the number of preterm births among those given the vaccine in a prior Pfizer study, in the main study under review and in the GSK study of a similar product were concerning, particularly given that the United States is not in the midst of an R.S.V. outbreak. She said the pattern should have been examined more carefully.

"That was a big missed opportunity and I feel it's unfair that we kicked the can down the road to the larger public," said Dr. El Sahly, who voted "no" to the question about whether the safety data was adequate.

There is another remedy under regulatory consideration, a monoclonal antibody shot developed by Sanofi and AstraZeneca, called nirsevimab. It is meant to be given at the hospital to babies who are born during the winter or in the fall, Jonathan Heinrichs, a Sanofi executive said in an interview.

The medication is under F.D.A. review and was found in one study of nearly 2,500 infants to reduce cases of severe R.S.V. by 75 percent.

Experts Strive to Prove 'This Bird Actually Does Exist'

By CATRIN EINHORN

If there's new hope, it's blurry. What's certain: The roller coaster tale of the ivory-billed woodpecker, a majestic bird whose presumed extinction has been punctuated by a series of contested rediscoveries, is going strong.

The latest twist is a peer-reviewed study Thursday in the journal Ecology and Evolution presenting sighting reports, audio recordings, trail camera images and drone video. Collected over the last decade in a Louisiana swamp forest, the precise location omitted for the birds' protection, the authors write that the evidence suggests the "intermittent but repeated presence" of birds that look and behave like ivory-billed woodpeckers.

But are they?

"It's this cumulative evidence from our multiyear search that leaves us very confident that this iconic species exists, and it persists in Louisiana and probably other places as well," said Steven C. Latta, one of the study's authors and director of conservation and field research at the National Aviary, a nonprofit bird zoo in Pittsburgh that helps lead a program that searches for the species.

But Dr. Latta acknowledges that no single piece of evidence is definitive, and the study is carefully tempered with words like "putative" and "possible."

Therein lies the problem. As one expert wrote during a previous ivory bill go-round: "The body of evidence is only as strong as the single strongest piece — ten cups of weak coffee do not make a pot of strong coffee."

This time, two experts who have been skeptical of previous sightings said they remained unconvinced.

"The trouble is, it's all very poor video," said Chris Elphick, a professor of conservation biology at the University of Connecticut who studies birds. Pileated and red-headed woodpeckers, among other species, can look a lot like ivory bills from a distance or from certain angles. Light can play games with the eye. Audio is easy to misconstrue.

"I don't think this changes very much, frankly," he said. "I would love to be wrong."

The stakes of the recent findings are heightened because federal wildlife officials have proposed that ivory-billed woodpeckers be declared extinct, which would end legal protection. Last year, citing "substantial disagreement among experts regarding the status of the species," the United States Fish and Wildlife Service extended its deadline to make a final ruling.



JAMES T. TANNER/SCIENCE SOURCE

An ivory-billed woodpecker in Louisiana in 1938. The last widely accepted sighting was in 1944.



PROJECT PRINCIPALIS

A new study by authors including Mark A. Michaels, left, and Steven C. Latta seeks to establish that ivory bills are not extinct.

A spokeswoman, Christine Schuldheisz, said the agency did not comment on outside studies but was working toward a final decision, which is expected later this year.

According to the authors of the new study, removing federal protection would be bad for any remaining ivory bills. But other scientists say there's a steep price to keeping them on the endangered species list.

"Whether or not limited federal conservation funds should be spent on chasing this ghost, instead of saving other genuinely endangered species and habitats, is a vital issue," said Richard O. Prum, a professor of ornithology at Yale.

Ivory bills fell into steep decline as Americans logged their habitat, old-growth swampy forests of the Southeast. Few remained by the 1930s, but a scientific expedition discovered a nest in Louisiana, in one of the largest remaining swaths of habitat. The land, called the Singer Tract, was leased for logging. Conservation groups tried to purchase the rights, but the company refused to sell. The last widely accepted ivory bill sighting in the United States was in 1944, a lone female, seen in her roost with the forest cleared around her.

Since then, purported sightings have sparked joy and backlash. One, in 1967, was heralded on the front page of The New York Times. Twenty years later, another one, in Cuba, where a subspecies or similar species may or may not hang on, was also reported on Page One. In 2002, searchers in Louisiana thought they'd captured audio of the ivory bill's distinctive double rap, but a computer analysis determined the sound to be distant gunshots. A reported sighting in Arkansas in 2004 led to a paper in Science and flurry of bird tourism, but that evidence was heavily criticized.

To Dr. Elphick, a birder as well as a scientist, one of the most telling results is what so much effort has not yielded: a single clear photograph.

"There are these incredibly rare birds that live in the middle of the Amazon that people can get good, identifiable photographs of," Dr. Elphick said. "And yet people have spent hundreds of thousands of hours trying to find and photograph ivory-billed woodpeckers in the United States. If there's really a population out there, it's inconceivable to me that no one could get a good picture."

But Dr. Latta, the study co-author, insisted that he had seen one clearly with his own eyes. He was in the field in 2019 to set up recording units, and he figures he spooked the bird. As it flew up and away, he got a close, unimpeded view of its signature markings.

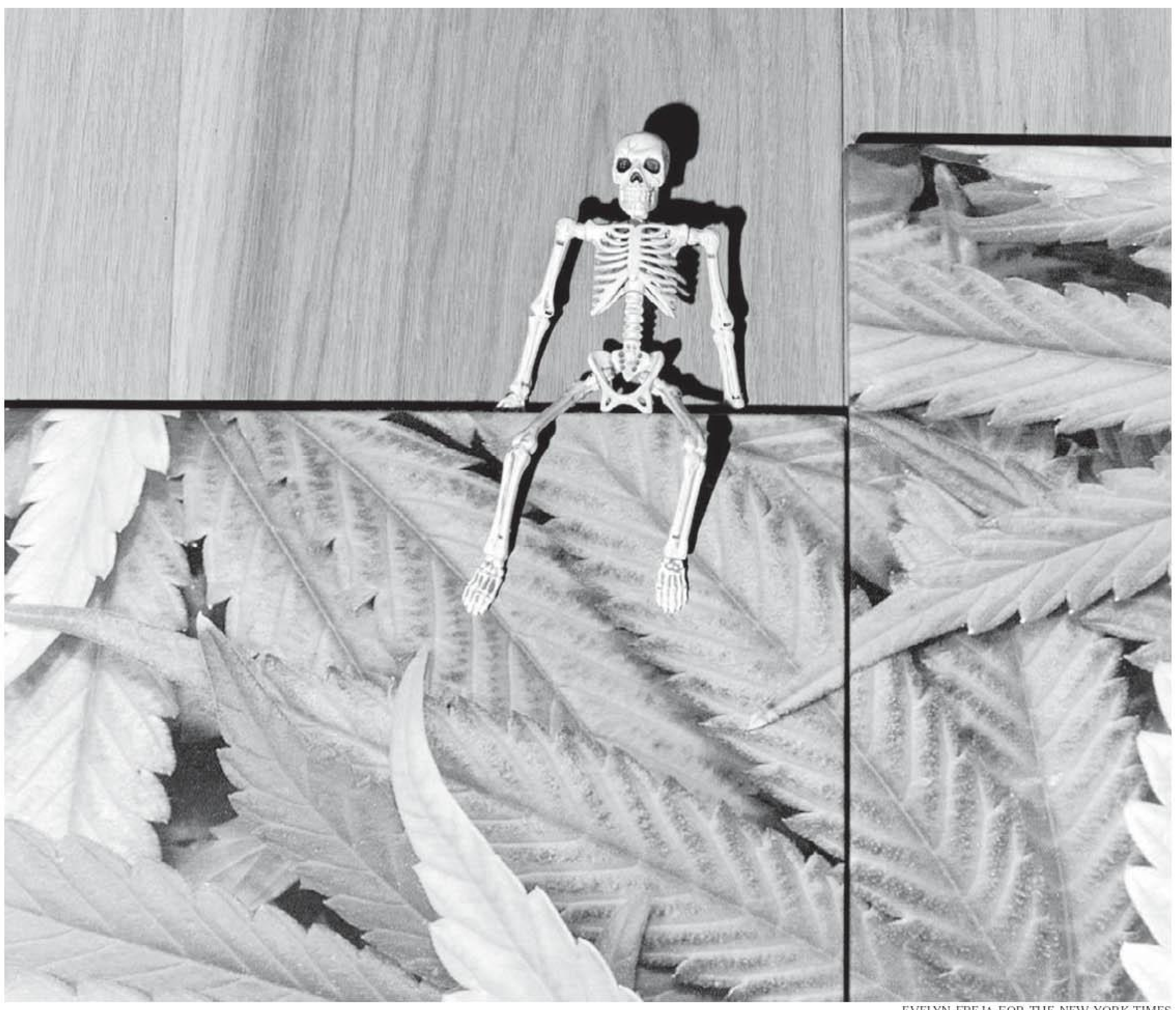
"I couldn't sleep for, like, three days," Dr. Latta said. "It was because I had this opportunity and I felt this responsibility to establish for the rest of the world, or at least the conservation world, that this bird actually does exist."

Opinion

The New York Times

COLUMNIST | ROSS DOUTHAT

Call Me Square, but Facts Show The Error of Legalizing Weed



EVELYN FREJA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The experiment so far has been a policy failure and an evident mistake.

OF ALL THE WAYS to win a culture war, the smoothest is to just make the other side seem hopelessly uncool. So it's been with the march of marijuana legalization.

There have been moral arguments about the excesses of the drug war and medical arguments about the potential benefits of pot, but the vibe of the whole debate has pitted the chill against the uptight, the cool against the square, the relaxed future against the Principal Skinners of the past.

As support for legalization has climbed, commanding a two-thirds majority in recent polling, any contrary argument has come to feel a bit futile, and even modest cavils are couched in an apologetic and defensive style. *Of course I don't question the right to get high, but perhaps the pervasive smell of weed in our cities is a bit unfortunate . . . ? I'm not a narc or anything, but maybe New York City doesn't need quite so many unlicensed pot dealers . . . ?*

All of this means that it will take a long time for conventional wisdom to acknowledge the truth that seems readily apparent to squares like me: Marijuana legalization as we've done it so far has been a policy failure, a potential social disaster, a clear and evident mistake.

The best version of the square's case is an essay by Charles Fain Lehman of the Manhattan Institute explaining his evolution from youthful libertarian to grown-up prohibitionist. It will not convince readers who come in with stringently libertarian presuppositions — who believe on high principle that consenting adults should be able to purchase, sell and enjoy almost any substance short of fentanyl and that no second-order social consequence can justify infringing on this right.

But Lehman explains in detail why the second-order effects of marijuana legalization have mostly vindicated the pessimists and skeptics.

First, on the criminal justice front, the expectation that legalizing pot would help reduce America's prison population by clearing out nonviolent offenders was always overdrawn, since marijuana convictions made up a small share of the incarceration rate even at its height.

Lehman argues that there is also no good evidence so far that legalization reduces racially discriminatory patterns of policing and arrests. In his view, cops often use marijuana as a pretext to search someone they suspect of a more serious crime, and they simply substitute some other pretext when the law changes, leaving arrest rates basically unchanged.

So legalization isn't necessarily striking a great blow against mass incarceration or for racial justice. Nor is it doing great things for public health.

There was hope, and some early evidence, that legal pot might substitute for opioid use, but some of the more recent data cuts the other way: A new paper published in The Journal of Health Economics found that "legal medical marijuana, particularly when available through retail dispensaries, is associated with higher opioid mortality."

There are therapeutic benefits to cannabis that justify its availability for prescription, but the evidence of its risks keeps increasing: This month brought a new paper strengthening the link between heavy pot use and the onset of schizophrenia in young men.

And the broad downside risks of marijuana, beyond extreme dangers like schizophrenia, remain as evident as ever: a form of personal degradation, of lost attention and performance and motivation, that isn't mortally dangerous in the way of heroin but that can damage or derail an awful lot of human lives.

Most casual pot smokers won't have this experience, but the legalization era has seen a sharp increase in the number of noncasual users. Occasional use has risen substantially since 2008, but daily or near-daily use is up much more, with around 16 million Americans, out of more than 50 million users, now suffering from what is termed marijuana use disorder.

In theory, there are technocratic responses to these unfortunate trends. In its ideal form, legalization would be accompanied by effective regulation and taxation, and as Lehman notes, on paper it should be possible to discourage addiction by raising taxes in the legal market, effectively nudging users toward more casual consumption.

In practice, it hasn't worked that way. Because of all the years of prohibition, a mature and supple illegal marketplace already exists, ready to undercut whatever prices the legal market charges. So to make the legal marketplace successful and amenable to regulation, you would probably need much more enforcement against the illegal marketplace — which is difficult and expensive and, again, obviously uncool, in conflict with the good-vibrations spirit of the legalizers.

Then you have the extreme case of New York, where legal permitting has lagged while untold numbers of illegal shops are doing business unmolested by the police. But even in less-incompetent-seeming states and localities, a similar pattern persists.

Lehman cites (and has reviewed) the recent book "Can Legal Weed Win? The Blunt Realities of Cannabis Economics," by Robin Goldstein and Daniel Sumner, which shows that unlicensed weed can cost as much as 50 percent less than the licensed variety. So the more you tax and regulate legal pot sales, the more you run the risk of having users just switch to the black market — and if you want the licensed market to crowd out the black market instead, you probably need to make legal pot as cheap as possible, which in turn undermines any effort to discourage chronic, life-altering abuse.

Thus policymakers who don't want so much chronic use and personal degradation have two options. They can set out to devise a much more effective (but necessarily expensive, complex and sometimes punitive) system of regulation and enforcement than what exists so far. Or they can reach for the blunt instrument of recriminalization, which Lehman prefers for its simplicity — with medical exceptions still carved out and with the possibility that possession remain legal and that only production and distribution be prohibited.

I expect legalization to advance much further before either of these alternatives builds significant support. But eventually the culture will recognize that under the banner of personal choice, we're running a general experiment in exploitation — addicting our more vulnerable neighbors to myriad pleasant-seeming vices, handing our children over to the social media dopamine machine and spreading degradation wherever casinos spring up and weed shops flourish.

With that realization, and only with that realization, will the squares get the hearing they deserve.

Workplace Testing Makes No Sense



MELANIE LAMBRICK

Kevin F. Boehnke
The director of controversial compounds in the University of Michigan Medical School's Chronic Pain and Fatigue Research Center.

THE email from my new job was not the welcome I was anticipating. I would "be required to complete a drug test within 72 hours." I had just accepted an offer as a faculty member to develop a research program on, of all things, cannabis's therapeutic effects on chronic pain. In addition to my research, I had been using medical cannabis to help manage my fibromyalgia symptoms.

Cannabis byproducts can be detected in urine for weeks, but I did what I could: I stopped taking my medicine, exercised frequently, drank water constantly. My test kept getting delayed, so by the time I took it, I was clear. But I had gone two months without my only useful pain medication.

And for what? All the test showed was that I had avoided drugs during the preceding weeks. I could have partied for the rest of the year, and no one would have been the wiser.

A staggering number of people have experienced this pointless exercise. Although 38 states have legalized medical cannabis, many employers continue to require their new hires to submit to a drug test.

Cannabis can, of course, get you high, so just as most employees aren't allowed to drink alcohol on the job, it makes sense that most employers don't want people using cannabis while they're working. The problem is that these tests do not assess current impairment or predict future employee safety risk.

Further, many conventional medicines can cause impairment. As long as you have a prescription, an employer can't penalize you for taking benzodiazepines. Why should it be different for medical cannabis? As for those using it recreationally, unless they are showing up to work impaired, does it matter?

Even CBD products, which can't get you high and aren't controlled substances, may contain a compound that can trigger a positive urine drug screen.

Given President Biden's recent call for the Food and Drug Administration to review whether cannabis should even be a controlled substance, it's beyond time to stop pre-employment drug testing for it. In addition to wasting substantial time and money and causing a great deal of unnecessary stress, these policies may harm people using these products medically.

Meanwhile, I doubt this article's publication will lead to my getting tested. Such uneven enforcement makes me suspect that some employers don't actually care; they are simply checking a box that doesn't need to be checked. Since there's no genuine safety or legal reason to keep doing this, isn't it time we let new hires urinate in peace?

Japan Needs to Finally Get Off the Sidelines

Countering the threat from China will require carrying more of the military burden.

Jennifer Lind
A faculty associate at the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies at Harvard and an associate fellow at Chatham House.

EVER since World War II ended, Japan has been passing the buck.

Sheltered by the postwar U.S. security alliance, Japan provided bases for American forces but kept its own military spending remarkably low for a country of its size and wealth, resisting American urging to share more of the burden.

China makes that no longer tenable. Its ambitions and expanding global influence threaten Japanese territory and an international order — based on democracy, free trade and respect for human rights — in which Japan plays a leading role.

Much is made of U.S. cultural and historical ties to Europe. But Japan is the linchpin of today's paramount geopolitical competition — China's push for regional dominance of East Asia — and it is America's most essential ally. As leaders of Group of 7 countries meet in Hiroshima this week with China high on the agenda, Japan and its allies must recognize that Japan is critical to successfully managing the Chinese challenge and needs to finally get off the sidelines.

The Cold War centered on a geopolitical competition for the dominance of Europe. The United States and NATO mobilized massive military power to deter an invasion of West Germany by the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies. By contrast, Japan stayed in the background. Its postwar Constitution — written primarily by U.S. occupation officials — forbade maintaining "land, sea and air forces." This suited leaders in Tokyo who sought to avoid divisive political debates about military spending (which was capped at 1 percent of G.D.P. for decades), and a Japanese public still traumatized by defeat in World War II. It also reassured Asian nations that Japan would not again embark on overseas aggression.

As the United States later realized Japan's value as a Cold War ally, it encouraged Tokyo to be more proactive. But Japanese leaders feared getting dragged into what they saw as America's far-flung adventures — or worse, a superpower war. In 1960, after a U-2 spy plane flown by the American pilot Francis Gary Powers was shot down over the Soviet Union, the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev threatened to attack air bases that hosted such planes. Protests broke out in Tokyo, calling for an end to the U.S. alliance. The alliance endured, but Japanese leaders continued to resist American calls for participation in Vietnam and the Persian Gulf.

China, North Korea and a more belligerent Russia have prompted Japan to reassess. Over the years Japanese governments have reinterpreted the pacifist Constitution to increase the military's capabilities and its role within the alliance. Today, Japan's Self-Defense Forces field highly sophisticated maritime capabilities, and while Japan still does not participate directly in overseas military operations, it sends peacekeepers to U.N. missions, supported U.S. naval forces in the Indian Ocean during the invasion of Afghanistan and has provided nonlethal aid to Ukraine since the Russian invasion.

In December, Japan's cabinet approved plans to double military spending to 2 percent of G.D.P. over the next five years, which, if realized, would make it the world's third-largest spender on defense, after the United States and China, and has announced plans to acquire U.S. Tomahawk cruise missiles. Rising numbers of Japanese support stronger military forces.

These changes have been rightly acknowledged as a remarkable departure for Japan. But — as Germany's present-day backtracking on its own pledges to increase military spending illustrate — there is no guarantee that they will materialize. Even if they do, they may not be enough.

During the Cold War, America's economy was far stronger than the Soviet Union's, and Japan grew to be the world's second-largest economy. While the United States and Japan performed at the technological cutting edge, the Soviets lagged behind after the dawn of the information age.

But China today is far more formidable. The world's second-largest economy, China has increased its military spending tenfold since 1995. It now fields the world's largest navy in number of vessels and the largest coast guard, and has drastically increased its missile forces. China is using its military and coast guard to menace Taiwan — which Japan views as critical for its own security — and intimidate neighboring countries over disputed territories, including Japanese-administered islands in the East China Sea.

One could argue that America's prodigious military strength is sufficient to meet the Chinese challenge. But an ambitious global strategy already makes many claims on U.S. military forces. Despite repeated promises to "pivot" to Asia, Washington's attention remains divided: It has been fighting a proxy war in Europe for over a year, and a war against Iran becomes more of a threat if Tehran acquires nuclear weapons.

Japan has a choice to make. It could continue to pass the buck, hoping that the United States will catch it. It could end its U.S. alliance to pursue neutrality or appease China. But either option is risky for a country on the front line.

If Japanese leaders are indeed committed to resisting Chinese dominance of Asia, they must view their country as the equivalent of West Germany during the Cold War: highly threatened, at the center of geopolitical competition and contributing significantly to its own defense. Yet Japan's new plans for military spending remain modest: Even after doubling its spending, Japan would still fall below the global average of 2.2 percent of G.D.P. Deterring a regional superpower such as China is likely to require more effort.

Observers often warn that a militarily stronger Japan triggers unease in a region where memories of its wartime violence persist and where an arms race is already underway. But outside of China and North Korea, many countries in the region and beyond do not fear a larger Japanese security role; security partners like India and Australia have encouraged it. Many East Asian countries view Japan favorably based on close ties in trade, technology, tourism and education; Tokyo's leadership in regional institutions and economic development; and its Covid-related assistance.

Surveys show that Japan is the major power that is most trusted among Southeast Asian countries, and Japan has increased security cooperation with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

Even South Korea, where historical resentment of Japanese persists, is pursuing its closest security cooperation with Japan in decades, propelled by the perception of shared threats from China and North Korea.

The balance of power in Asia is shifting toward China. This is not a far-off threat that Japan can avoid. This is Japan's fight.

The Supreme Court Has a Corruption Problem

Randall D. Eliason

A former chief of the fraud and public corruption section at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia.

THE scandal surrounding Justice Clarence Thomas has further eroded the already record-low public confidence in the Supreme Court. If Chief Justice John Roberts wonders how such a thing could have happened, he might start looking for answers within the cloistered walls of his own courtroom.

Over more than two decades, the Supreme Court has gutted laws aimed at fighting corruption and at limiting the ability of the powerful to enrich public officials in a position to advance their interests. As a result, today wealthy individuals and corporations may buy political access and influence with little fear of legal consequences, either for them or for the beneficiaries of their largess.

No wonder Justice Thomas apparently thought his behavior was no big deal.

He has been under fire for secretly accepting, from the Republican megadonor Harlan Crow, luxury vacations worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, a real estate deal and the payment of private school tuition for a grandnephew the justice was raising. Meanwhile, over the years, conservative groups with which Mr. Crow was affiliated filed amicus briefs in several matters before the Supreme Court.

That sounds like the very definition of corruption. But over the years, many justices — and not just conservatives — have championed a different definition.

The landmark case is the court's 2010 decision in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission. A five-justice majority — including Justice Thomas — struck down decades-old restrictions on independent campaign expenditures by corporations, holding that they violated the companies' free speech rights. It rejected the argument that such laws were necessary to prevent the damage to democracy that results from unbridled corporate spending and the undue influence it can create.

The government's legitimate interest in fighting corruption, the court held, is limited to direct quid pro quo deals, in which a public official makes a specific commitment to act in exchange for something of value.

In dissent, Justice John Paul Stevens accused the majority of adopting a "crabbed view of corruption" that the court itself had rejected in an earlier case. He argued that Congress has a legitimate interest in limiting the effects of corporate money on politics: "Corruption operates along a spectrum, and the majority's apparent belief that quid pro quo arrangements can be neatly demarcated from other improper influences does not accord with the theory or reality of politics."

Citizens United opened the floodgates to unlimited corporate spending on behalf of political candidates and to the influence that spending necessarily provides. But the decision didn't come out of nowhere: The court has often been unanimous in its zeal for curtailing criminal corruption laws.

In the 1999 case of United States v. Sun-Diamond Growers of California, the court unanimously held, in effect, that it is not a violation of the federal gratuities statute for an individual or corporation to have a public official on private retainer. The court rejected a theory known as a status gratuity, where a donor showers a public official with gifts over time based on the official's position (that is in contrast with a more common gratuity, given as a thank-you for a particular act by the official). The quite reasonable rationale behind that theory was that when matters of interest to the donor arose, the past gifts (and hope for future ones) might lead the official to favor his or her benefactor.

That actually sounds a lot like the Crow-Thomas relationship. But the court ruled that the gratuities law requires that a particular gift be linked to a particular official act. Without such a direct link, a series of gifts to a public official over time does not violate the statute, even if the goal is to curry favor.



CRISTINA SPANÒ

Considering the justices' rulings, the Thomas scandal isn't surprising.

In the wake of Sun-Diamond, federal prosecutors increasingly turned to a more expansive legal theory known as honest services fraud. But in Skilling v. United States from 2010, the court ruled that theory is limited to cases of bribes and kickbacks — once again, direct quid pro quo deals. Three justices, including Justice Thomas, wanted to go even further and declare the statute that prohibits honest services fraud unconstitutional.

The court proceeded to limit its "crabbed view of corruption" even further. In the 2016 case McDonnell v. United States, the court held that selling government access is not unlawful. Gov. Bob McDonnell of Virginia and his wife, Maureen, accepted about $175,000 in secret gifts from the businessman Jonnie Williams, who wanted Virginia's public universities to perform research studies on his company's dietary supplement to assist with its Food and Drug Administration approval. In exchange, Mr. McDonnell asked subordinates to meet with Mr. Williams about such studies and hosted a luncheon at the governor's mansion to connect him with university health researchers.

A jury convicted the McDonnells on several counts of corruption. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit unanimously affirmed the convictions. But the Supreme Court unanimously reversed, holding that the things Mr. McDonnell did for Mr. Williams did not qualify as "official acts" under federal bribery law. Selling official access may be tawdry, the court held, but it is not a crime.

Those who think Justice Thomas may be guilty of corruption may not realize just how difficult the court itself has made it to prove such a case. Now only the most ham-handed officials, clumsy enough to engage in a direct quid pro quo, risk prosecution.

Viewed in light of this history, the Thomas scandal becomes less surprising. The Supreme Court's own rulings would indicate that the justices don't believe that what he did is corrupt. A powerful conservative with interests before the court who regularly provides a justice with vacations worth more than his annual salary is, as the court said in Citizens United, merely the "appearance" of potential corruption. In the court's view, the public has no reason to be concerned.

But the public clearly is, and should be, concerned over the ability of the rich and powerful to purchase access and influence unavailable to most citizens. Unfortunately, Citizens United is here to stay without a constitutional amendment or an overruling by the court, neither of which is very likely.

But it's still possible for the rest of the country to move past the court's naïve and inadequate view of corruption. Congress could amend criminal corruption laws to expand their scope and overturn the results in Sun-Diamond, Skilling and McDonnell. It could increase funding for enforcement of the Ethics in Government Act and increase the penalties for filing a false financial disclosure form (or failing to file one at all).

Beefed-up disclosure regulations could make it more difficult for officials to hide financial interests and make it clear that there are no disclosure exceptions for enormous gifts of "personal hospitality," contrary to what Justice Thomas claims he believed. And Congress could pass legislation like the proposed Disclose Act, to require transparency regarding who is behind political donations and spending.

Congress so far has shown little interest in passing such reforms. But that's where the remedy lies. It's time for Congress to act.

In his Citizens United dissent, Justice Stevens observed, "A democracy cannot function effectively when its constituent members believe laws are being bought and sold." That's exactly how it now appears to the public — and that applies to Supreme Court justices as well as to politicians.

COLUMNIST | PAMELA PAUL

The Decade That China Cannot Delete

IT WOULD SEEM impossible to forget or minimize the Cultural Revolution in China, which lasted from 1966 to 1976, resulted in an estimated 1.6 million to two million deaths and scarred a generation and its descendants.

The movement, which under Mao Zedong's leadership sought to purge Chinese society of all remaining non-Communist elements, upended nearly every hallowed institution and custom. Teachers and schools long held in esteem were denounced. Books were burned and banned, museums ransacked, private art collections destroyed. Intellectuals were tortured.

But in China, a country where information is often suppressed and history is constantly rewritten — witness recent government censorship of Covid research and the obscuring of Hong Kong's British colonial past in new school textbooks — the memory of the Cultural Revolution risks being forgotten, sanitized and abused, to the detriment of the nation's future.

The Chinese government has never been particularly eager to preserve the memory of that sordid decade. When I spent six weeks traveling in China in 1994 — a slightly more open time in the country — I encountered few public acknowledgments of the Cultural Revolution. Museum placards and catalogs often simply skipped a decade in their timelines or provided brief references in the passive voice along the lines of "historical events that took place."

But in her new book, "Red Memory: The Afterlives of China's Cultural Revolution," the journalist Tania Branigan notes that under Xi Jinping, China's top leader, efforts to suppress this history have intensified — with troubling implications for the political health of the country at a time when it looms larger than ever on the world stage.

"When you've had a collective trauma, you really need a collective response," Branigan told me recently. "I can see why the Communist Party wants to avoid the rancor and bitterness, but when you don't have that kind of acknowledgment, you can move on — but you can't really recover."

Though Xi himself was a victim of the Cultural Revolution — reportedly betrayed by his own mother, exiled into rural poverty — he "is more conscious of the uses and disadvantages of history than any leader before him, bar perhaps Mao himself," Branigan writes in the book. In 2021, Xi warned the Communist Party against "historical nihilism" — any unflattering portrayal of the party's past — an existential threat as great, in his estimation, as Western democracy.

High school textbooks in China now reduce the Cultural Revolution to just a few short paragraphs. The only national heritage spot devoted to it was closed to visitors when Branigan, who reported from Beijing for The Guardian from 2008 to 2015, tried to enter. Those who had lived through the Cultural Revolution were often reluctant to speak with her. Some of her excursions to research the movement were monitored, and relevant sites were closed off.

"The party and those it rules have conspired in amnesia," she writes. "A decade has disappeared."

In the absence of real history, a small nostalgia industry has arisen in China around the Cultural Revolution, which includes themed restaurants, re-enactments, costumes and associated kitsch that bear a distinct resemblance to our own country's Civil War re-enactments, Confederate statues and wedding-venue Southern plantations. The United States has in recent years reconsidered some but far from all of this disturbing nostalgia, as Clint Smith powerfully documented in his 2021 book, "How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning With the History of Slavery Across America."

Efforts to suppress the memory of the Cultural Revolution have grown.

But whether in China or in America, when a country avoids a full reckoning with its darkest periods, such nostalgic impulses tend to foster wishful thinking and facilitate propaganda. In China, many young people who never experienced the horrors of Maoism now yearn for its "idealism" and clarity; former Red Guards recall the unity and purpose missing in today's materialist society. Such distortions can also lead to what Branigan refers to as "a tragic fatalism" — what the Chinese call "eating bitterness" — renouncing the power to enact personal, societal or political change.

Another term she uses when accounting for the price of enforced forgetting is "the hum of shame." Even those who were otherwise patriotic described their fellow Chinese to Branigan as "ethically hollow." They lamented a kind of numb passivity, an absence of conscience, a "sickness of the soul." According to her, the Chinese consider "moral decline" to be the country's most pressing threat, ahead of both poverty and crime.

Such is the inevitable legacy of a political trauma as totalizing in scope as the Cultural Revolution. "No workplace remained untouched," Branigan writes. "No household remained innocent. 'Complicity' is too small a word — comrade turned on comrade, friend upon friend, husband upon wife and child upon parent. You could build a career on such betrayals, until the currents shifted once more and the victims turned upon you. Such intimate treacheries and abrupt reversals rent the very fabric of China, Confucian ideals of family obedience and newer Communist pledges of fraternity."

When the Cultural Revolution comes up in American conversation, it's generally in debates over the rise of groupthink and mob mentalities, performative outrage on Twitter and on college campuses. Parallels certainly exist: Political leaders fomenting cultural wars, polarization reducing differences of opinion to signifiers of ally and heretic and the media resorting to shouty sloganeering over considered debate.

But Branigan's book offers an equally important cautionary lesson: the perils of ignoring or distorting history. What a country downplays in its historical record continues to reverberate, whether it's the Cultural Revolution in China or the treatment of Native Americans and the legacy of slavery in the United States. And just as Xi Jinping can censor China's recent Covid record, so can America attempt to whitewash events — attempts to overturn the 2020 election, the insurrection at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021 — in its own recent past.

Near the end of Smith's "How the Word Is Passed," the author describes his grandparents' experiences of segregation in the South, which took place just a decade before China's Cultural Revolution. "Black-and-white photographs and film footage can convince us that these episodes transpired in a distant past," he writes, "untouched by our contemporary world." But as his grandmother tells him, "It was for real, and I had lived it."

LETTERS

A Generation Named for Connie Chung

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "I Got My Name From Connie Chung. So Did They," by Connie Wang (Opinion guest essay, May 14), about the many Asian women named after the TV journalist:

It feels strange to know that there are so many Asian Connies out there, all close in age range in our 30s and 40s. But it's a good strange feeling. It feels as if I have serendipitously entered a vast sisterhood, where the profound bond among us was formed by the influence of one woman on our mothers over 30 years ago.

In my family, watching Connie Chung host "CBS Evening News" in the early '90s was a family event. There were barely any Asian faces on TV at the time, let alone on a major news program. Connie Chung stood out in every way.

"You can't be what you can't see." When Ms. Chung came on the screen, my mom saw what was possible for the next generation right in front of her, far from the sights of Asian women working in menial jobs that defined my mom's day-to-day life as a new immigrant.

So when I suggested Connie as my English name, my mother liked it right away. "Keep it. It's good, it's just like Connie Chung," she would say. With that choice of a name, my mom had poured all her hopes for me. Little did I know then that across the country people were being named Connie for that very same reason.

Times are different now. There is a lot more diversity in the media and other professions. While we still have much work ahead of us, let us take a moment to celebrate this progress.

CONNIE WU, SAN FRANCISCO

TO THE EDITOR:

My daughter was adopted from Guangdong Province, China, in 1998 when she was 13 months old. She has no memory of the following story except through my retelling.

It was a spring afternoon in the year 2000 at the Museum of Life and Science in Durham, N.C. My toddler and I took our places on the open-air train for a ride through the grounds.

"It's who you think it is," the ticket taker whispered, nodding over her shoulder. Two seats ahead, surrounded by visitors, were Maury Povich and Connie Chung.

Celebrity watching prevailed over scenery and animal sighting during that ride. Afterward, as a cluster of visitors lingered with Mr. Povich, Ms. Chung strolled ahead alone. But not for long. My daughter, rarely more than an inch from my side, leery of all strangers, let go of my hand and trotted up to grab Connie's leg. Surprised, smiling, Ms. Chung lifted my daughter into her arms.

Connie Wang's wonderful article describes the surprise that Ms. Chung expressed when told: "There are so many of us out here. Named after you." Something about that surprise, of not knowing her effect on others, stays with me.

ANNE TOOHEY
CHAPEL HILL, N.C.

The Debt Limit Debate

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Ignoring the Debt Limit Would Be Dangerous" (Opinion guest essay, May 15):

I disagree with my longtime friend Michael McConnell about the politics of the debt ceiling.

Of course Congress has the power of the purse. But the problem here is not Congress as a whole; it is a slim majority in the House. And that majority is controlled by a handful of its most extreme members.

The debt ceiling debate is certainly not politics as usual. It is a threat to destroy the country's finances and its position of world leadership unless the Senate and the president give in to that faction's extreme demands.

Neither the country nor the Constitution can function if every choke point in the system of checks and balances is exploited for maximum leverage without regard to consequences. If one side is willing to wreck the economy unless it gets its way, why not both sides? If one faction, why not many different factions with inconsistent demands?

The House, the Senate and the president bargain over spending in the budget and appropriations process, not through threats to destroy the economy if I don't get my way.

DOUGLAS LAYCOCK
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA.

The writer is a professor at the University of Virginia Law School.

Exploited in Korea

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "South Korea Created a Brutal Sex Trade for American Soldiers" (front page, May 3):

As your article so painfully makes clear, the brutal forced prostitution of young and vulnerable South Korean women and girls was caused not just by the government of South Korea but by the United States as well.

There is much that the U.S. can and should do. It should be paying reparations. The government and the armed services chiefs should offer apologies to the women who went through this and to their families.

And those who are in charge of curbing sexual harassment in the military today should redouble their efforts as they grow to understand just how systemic sexual assaults and misogyny have been in the armed forces for so long.

JEAN ZORN
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA.

DeSantis, Authoritarian

TO THE EDITOR:

The efforts by Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida to harass Disney for exercising its rights of free speech and to ban books from the classroom that do not support his political or racial beliefs are the mark of an authoritarian tyrant. They show that right-wing politicians are the perpetrators, not the victims, of "cancel culture."

Republicans should consider how they would react if a Democratic governor retaliated against a corporation for opposing a Democratic program or embarked upon a program to ban conservative books.

This is not the sort of person who belongs anywhere near the White House, and this is not the sort of person whom anyone should support. Hard to believe that Mr. DeSantis attended two fine academic institutions — Yale and Harvard Law — and learned so little about free speech, democracy and American constitutional values.

DAVID S. ELKIND
GREENWICH, CONN.

The writer is a lawyer.

Engaging the Homeless

TO THE EDITOR:

"In New York City, Making the Invisible Visible" (The Story Behind the Story, May 7) yields a question: To what extent is the mental illness we see in homeless people the result of — not the cause of — their being homeless?

Hundreds of people silently pass them by each day, turning away, ignoring a hand held out for a donation. In plain sight, day after day, they live in public solitary confinement, the sort that is now being attacked in the courts as an inhumane, cruel and unusual punishment that often leads to mental illness when used in prisons.

A civic organization I belong to in Florida recently began refurbishing a public park, long known as the home of the homeless in our city, by organizing periodic cleanups by volunteers and painting a mural honoring a local eccentric woman, long dead.

After a while, the homeless folks began approaching our volunteers and the painter, viewing the art and then striking up tentative conversations. One homeless woman turned out to be an amateur painter, and a small portion of the mural was turned over to her to design and paint.

Within weeks, the homeless frequenting the park began policing it — picking up trash and chastising people who dropped it. And, most important, collectively and individually, some bizarre behaviors faded away, replaced by social interaction.

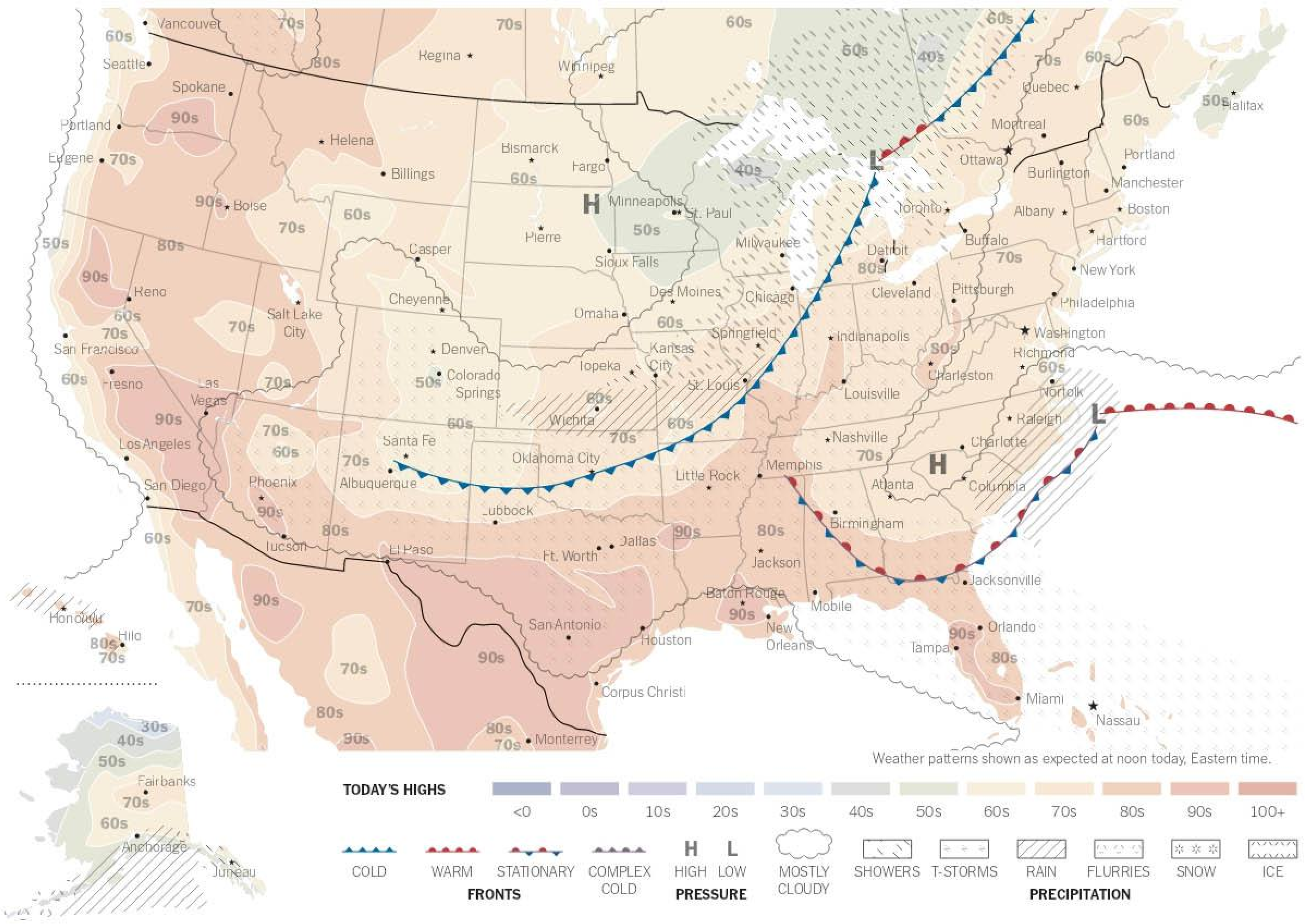
I now wonder what the results would be if the public at large began acknowledging the homeless, even by saying, "Hello," or "I don't have any cash with me today, sorry," rather than simply walking on.

As someone who lived in New York City for 30 years, I know that the city is filled with visible-yet-invisible people and am, frankly, ashamed that I didn't catch onto this notion earlier.

STEPHEN PHILLIPS
ST. PETERSBURG, FLA.

Weather Report

Meteorology by **AccuWeather**



Metropolitan Forecast

TODAY ....Clouds and sunshine, breezy

High 68. It will be dry today, with both sunshine and clouds. It will be breezy during the afternoon, with winds at 8 to 16 miles per hour, as high pressure leaves.

TONIGHT ....Turning cloudy

Low 56. Cloud coverage will gradually increase, but it will stay dry. Winds will be light. The low temperatures will be close to average.

TOMORROW ....Occasional rain

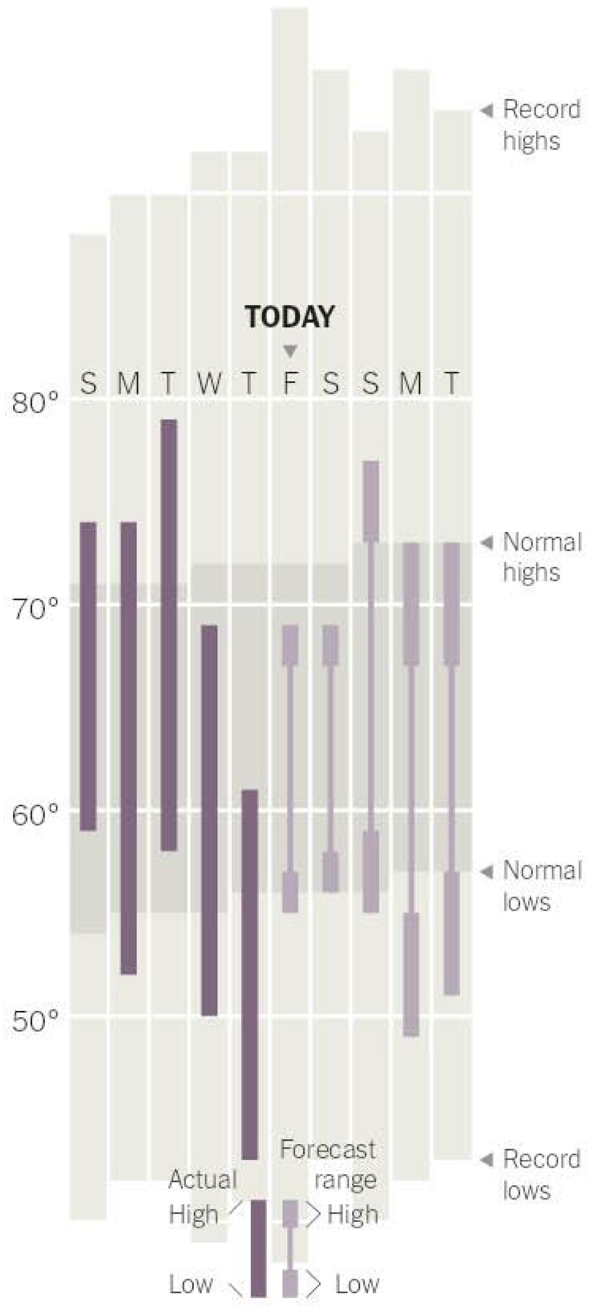
High 68. Low pressure moving near the area will lead to a mostly cloudy sky, with occasional rain. Temperatures will be slightly lower than average. Winds will be 5 to 10 m.p.h.

SUNDAY ....Warmer

It will be a sunny as high pressure builds into the area. Temperatures will be on the rise. Winds at 6 to 12 m.p.h. High 75.

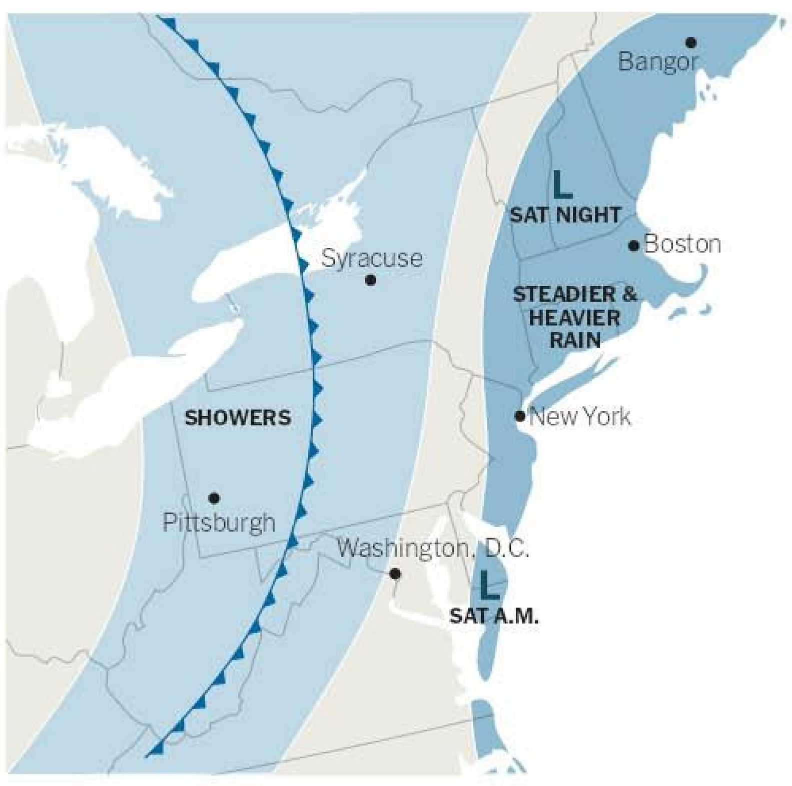
MONDAY
TUESDAY ....Mostly sunny

Expect sunshine on Monday as high pressure moves across New England. Winds will be light. High 70. Tuesday, more sunshine. High 70.



Highlight: Rain Spreads North Saturday

Low pressure is expected to track north along the East Coast Saturday, spreading an area of moderate to heavy rainfall from the Middle Atlantic Coast to New England. A general half inch to as much as 2 inches of rainfall is forecast. Farther west, a cold front will bring showers to the Appalachians. Drier air will advance from west to east across the region Sunday.



National Forecast

As dry air and sunshine associated with high pressure hold on in the Northeast today, a storm will bring rain along the Carolina coast. Winds and surf will kick up in the area as well. Farther to the south and west, a vast zone of showers and thunderstorms will extend from the Midwest to the South Central, Southeast and interior Southwest states.

Some of the storms may be severe from the southern Plains to the middle portion of the Mississippi Valley. As dry air pushes across the northern Plains, the visibility and sky may be obscured by smoke from wildfires in western Canada.

A heat wave will continue over the Northwest. A light breeze will create more muggy conditions for a few portions of the California coast.

Cities

High/low temperatures for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday, Eastern time, and precipitation (in inches) for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday. Expected conditions for today and tomorrow.

C	Clouds	**S**	Sun
F	Fog	**Sn**	Snow
H	Haze	**SS**	Snow showers
I	Ice	**T**	Thunderstorms
PC	Partly cloudy	**Tr**	Trace
R	Rain	**W**	Windy
Sh	Showers	**–**	Not available

N.Y.C. region	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
New York City	61/ 43 0	68/ 56 S	68/ 57 R
Bridgeport	59/ 42 0	67/ 55 S	64/ 57 R
Caldwell	65/ 39 0	71/ 55 S	69/ 57 Sh
Danbury	62/ 34 0	68/ 53 PC	67/ 57 R
Islip	59/ 43 0	66/ 54 S	66/ 59 R
Newark	64/ 46 0	72/ 59 S	71/ 62 R
Trenton	64/ 40 0	70/ 54 S	69/ 57 Sh
White Plains	62/ 38 0	67/ 52 S	65/ 57 R

United States	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Albany	65/ 45 0	75/ 54 S	68/ 55 Sh
Albuquerque	79/ 58 0.10	71/ 54 T	76/ 55 T
Anchorage	62/ 46 0	61/ 48 Sh	58/ 44 PC
Atlanta	74/ 61 0.18	75/ 63 PC	78/ 63 T
Atlantic City	59/ 53 0	65/ 57 PC	67/ 58 R
Austin	90/ 64 0	91/ 68 T	83/ 63 T
Baltimore	71/ 52 0	73/ 56 PC	77/ 60 Sh
Baton Rouge	89/ 68 0.04	92/ 73 T	90/ 69 T
Birmingham	79/ 66 0.57	79/ 69 T	78/ 59 T
Boise	85/ 58 0	90/ 59 S	92/ 60 S
Boston	62/ 47 0	70/ 54 PC	66/ 58 R
Buffalo	68/ 54 0	74/ 58 C	62/ 51 R
Burlington	63/ 48 0	76/ 56 W	72/ 55 Sh
Casper	62/ 38 0.01	70/ 39 PC	76/ 44 T
Charlotte	76/ 59 0	74/ 60 PC	79/ 63 T
Chattanooga	79/ 62 0.71	77/ 64 S	76/ 56 T
Chicago	76/ 62 0	68/ 49 Sh	67/ 51 S
Cincinnati	77/ 60 0	76/ 58 T	70/ 49 PC
Cleveland	67/ 57 0	75/ 59 T	64/ 50 PC
Colorado Springs	65/ 50 0.16	58/ 49 T	68/ 50 T
Columbus	76/ 62 0	73/ 59 T	68/ 49 PC
Concord, N.H.	65/ 37 0	74/ 47 S	68/ 56 R
Dallas-Ft. Worth	88/ 71 0	86/ 65 T	78/ 62 C
Denver	62/ 48 0.12	62/ 48 T	71/ 49 T
Des Moines	83/ 54 0.10	65/ 46 C	72/ 53 S
Detroit	67/ 48 0	79/ 55 T	65/ 48 PC
El Paso	85/ 67 0	90/ 64 S	86/ 64 T
Fargo	65/ 44 0.02	66/ 44 PC	75/ 52 PC
Hartford	66/ 41 0	72/ 52 PC	67/ 58 R
Honolulu	79/ 71 0.64	83/ 72 Sh	84/ 74 R
Houston	89/ 68 0	90/ 70 PC	88/ 69 T
Indianapolis	75/ 56 0	80/ 52 T	69/ 51 S
Jackson	85/ 64 0.04	87/ 67 T	82/ 64 T
Jacksonville	82/ 67 1.29	84/ 67 T	83/ 69 T
Kansas City	82/ 63 0	71/ 46 C	71/ 50 S
Key West	87/ 77 0	87/ 78 S	87/ 78 T
Las Vegas	98/ 74 0	96/ 74 PC	91/ 74 PC
Lexington	79/ 60 0	77/ 61 T	72/ 49 S
Little Rock	87/ 67 0	86/ 68 T	78/ 57 S
Los Angeles	76/ 59 0	75/ 59 PC	76/ 59 PC
Louisville	81/ 65 0	80/ 62 T	72/ 54 S
Memphis	86/ 68 0	85/ 65 T	75/ 57 PC
Miami	91/ 75 0.13	91/ 76 T	89/ 75 T
Milwaukee	65/ 59 0	69/ 49 Sh	67/ 53 S
Mpls.-St. Paul	71/ 45 0.10	59/ 46 PC	72/ 54 S
Nashville	82/ 64 0.10	78/ 65 T	75/ 53 PC
New Orleans	86/ 71 0.04	89/ 73 PC	88/ 73 T
Norfolk	68/ 61 0	67/ 63 C	78/ 63 C
Oklahoma City	75/ 64 0.26	71/ 54 T	72/ 54 PC
Omaha	81/ 52 0.10	69/ 43 PC	74/ 50 S
Orlando	91/ 70 0.10	89/ 71 T	91/ 72 T
Philadelphia	68/ 50 0	72/ 58 S	72/ 59 Sh
Phoenix	97/ 75 0	92/ 74 PC	95/ 77 PC
Pittsburgh	74/ 55 0	77/ 58 PC	66/ 48 Sh
Portland, Me.	59/ 43 0	63/ 48 W	62/ 54 Sh
Portland, Ore.	83/ 58 0	85/ 58 C	79/ 57 PC
Providence	61/ 41 0	66/ 53 PC	64/ 57 R
Raleigh	76/ 58 0	74/ 61 C	84/ 62 T
Reno	87/ 56 0	89/ 56 S	88/ 56 C
Richmond	72/ 53 0	73/ 58 PC	78/ 61 T
Rochester	64/ 50 0	78/ 56 C	63/ 50 R
Sacramento	88/ 56 0	85/ 55 S	83/ 55 S
Salt Lake City	78/ 58 0	83/ 60 S	86/ 63 S
San Antonio	89/ 68 0	91/ 71 T	83/ 67 T
San Diego	67/ 61 0	68/ 60 C	70/ 61 PC
San Francisco	64/ 55 0	65/ 56 PC	63/ 56 C
San Jose	77/ 54 0	77/ 54 PC	74/ 53 PC
San Juan	87/ 77 0.08	88/ 76 PC	87/ 75 Sh
Seattle	79/ 55 0	77/ 56 PC	75/ 51 PC
Sioux Falls	76/ 44 Tr	61/ 41 PC	74/ 51 S
Spokane	83/ 61 0	87/ 61 PC	88/ 62 S
St. Louis	84/ 66 0	80/ 52 T	73/ 55 S
St. Thomas	88/ 78 0	86/ 78 PC	86/ 78 Sh
Syracuse	67/ 49 0	79/ 58 W	68/ 49 Sh
Tampa	89/ 74 0.05	90/ 75 T	89/ 76 T
Toledo	70/ 47 0	81/ 55 T	65/ 50 PC
Tucson	87/ 65 0	89/ 64 S	93/ 66 S
Tulsa	80/ 64 0	70/ 53 R	75/ 53 PC
Virginia Beach	68/ 60 0	68/ 64 R	77/ 66 C
Washington	71/ 54 0	73/ 57 PC	75/ 58 T
Wichita	76/ 62 0	72/ 47 R	75/ 50 PC
Wilmington, Del.	69/ 49 0	73/ 55 S	72/ 59 Sh

Africa	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Algiers	70/ 51 0.05	67/ 58 Sh	68/ 52 Sh
Cairo	86/ 66 0	84/ 64 S	86/ 68 S
Cape Town	63/ 51 0	65/ 51 PC	63/ 56 C
Dakar	106/ 73 0	82/ 74 PC	81/ 73 S
Johannesburg	64/ 48 0.04	66/ 39 S	63/ 44 S
Nairobi	80/ 60 0.06	77/ 57 PC	81/ 56 C
Tunis	75/ 59 0.08	73/ 64 Sh	72/ 62 C

Asia/Pacific	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Baghdad	106/ 70 0.01	108/ 73 PC	95/ 72 T
Bangkok	99/ 82 0	103/ 83 PC	101/ 83 PC
Beijing	82/ 55 0	82/ 59 Sh	79/ 57 PC
Damascus	84/ 61 0	81/ 51 PC	79/ 53 S
Hong Kong	91/ 81 0.02	91/ 81 T	90/ 80 T
Jakarta	88/ 77 0.04	90/ 78 T	90/ 78 T
Jerusalem	78/ 58 0	72/ 56 PC	72/ 54 PC
Karachi	92/ 82 0	95/ 82 PC	94/ 81 PC
Manila	90/ 79 0.18	91/ 81 T	91/ 81 T
Mumbai	91/ 83 0	93/ 83 S	93/ 82 S
New Delhi	101/ 74 0	105/ 84 PC	110/ 84 PC
Riyadh	95/ 83 0.02	102/ 82 PC	104/ 78 W
Seoul	77/ 63 0.07	83/ 61 S	75/ 59 PC
Shanghai	73/ 65 0	80/ 63 C	85/ 65 PC
Singapore	89/ 79 0.25	89/ 78 T	89/ 77 T
Sydney	63/ 49 0.17	65/ 46 S	67/ 49 S
Taipei City	91/ 75 0.03	83/ 72 Sh	81/ 72 C
Tehran	90/ 65 0	91/ 73 S	91/ 72 PC
Tokyo	86/ 66 0	72/ 64 R	73/ 64 PC

Europe	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Amsterdam	57/ 42 0	66/ 51 PC	67/ 53 PC
Athens	76/ 60 0.12	74/ 59 S	77/ 63 PC
Berlin	63/ 40 0	65/ 48 PC	69/ 55 PC
Brussels	61/ 40 0	64/ 49 PC	65/ 51 PC
Budapest	60/ 53 0.36	72/ 53 Sh	79/ 56 PC
Copenhagen	54/ 41 0	60/ 46 PC	63/ 52 PC
Dublin	63/ 46 0	62/ 47 PC	61/ 48 PC
Edinburgh	62/ 49 0.02	62/ 45 PC	63/ 51 PC
Frankfurt	64/ 42 0	66/ 51 PC	68/ 56 PC
Geneva	59/ 47 0	63/ 53 Sh	66/ 53 PC
Helsinki	55/ 42 0	64/ 41 S	71/ 44 S
Istanbul	61/ 57 0.10	65/ 55 Sh	69/ 56 PC
Kyiv	77/ 56 0	75/ 56 S	74/ 51 Sh
Lisbon	77/ 60 0	79/ 60 S	77/ 56 PC
London	66/ 49 0	62/ 44 Sh	66/ 46 PC
Madrid	73/ 45 0	72/ 46 PC	70/ 49 PC
Moscow	75/ 53 0.09	62/ 47 C	63/ 48 PC
Nice	70/ 59 0.12	67/ 60 R	67/ 61 R
Oslo	61/ 36 0	64/ 44 S	72/ 45 S
Paris	63/ 45 0	66/ 52 PC	67/ 52 PC
Prague	57/ 40 0	59/ 45 C	71/ 52 Sh
Rome	67/ 57 0.20	72/ 60 T	71/ 59 T
St. Petersburg	60/ 48 0.11	61/ 44 PC	66/ 47 PC
Stockholm	59/ 35 0	67/ 40 S	67/ 40 S
Vienna	58/ 47 0	63/ 48 C	74/ 54 Sh
Warsaw	57/ 44 0.19	60/ 51 C	73/ 51 PC

North America	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Acapulco	91/ 76 0	91/ 77 PC	92/ 77 PC
Bermuda	77/ 70 0	74/ 68 PC	75/ 68 PC
Edmonton	65/ 37 0	82/ 48 PC	83/ 54 PC
Guadalajara	89/ 60 0	88/ 63 C	84/ 62 C
Havana	90/ 67 0.10	88/ 69 T	89/ 71 S
Kingston	90/ 79 0.02	91/ 80 T	90/ 79 T
Martinique	90/ 76 0	89/ 76 PC	89/ 77 PC
Mexico City	80/ 56 0	81/ 56 C	79/ 58 PC
Monterrey	85/ 68 0	90/ 72 C	85/ 66 T
Montreal	58/ 35 0	75/ 57 PC	68/ 54 C
Nassau	87/ 75 0.05	85/ 75 T	87/ 75 Sh
Panama City	94/ 76 0	91/ 77 T	89/ 75 T
Quebec City	56/ 30 0	71/ 53 PC	69/ 54 C
Santo Domingo	90/ 73 0.06	90/ 73 T	87/ 72 T
Toronto	57/ 35 0	73/ 57 C	62/ 49 R
Vancouver	70/ 55 0	69/ 54 PC	70/ 54 C
Winnipeg	50/ 41 0.10	70/ 47 PC	79/ 42 PC

South America	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Buenos Aires	70/ 61 0	66/ 53 R	61/ 57 PC
Caracas	89/ 75 0.04	90/ 74 C	90/ 75 T
Lima	76/ 68 0	75/ 69 PC	75/ 68 PC
Quito	72/ 45 0.03	67/ 49 Sh	66/ 51 R
Recife	84/ 76 0.04	86/ 76 C	85/ 76 Sh
Rio de Janeiro	75/ 68 0.02	76/ 65 S	76/ 67 S
Santiago	70/ 39 0	67/ 41 C	67/ 46 S

Metropolitan Almanac

In Central Park, for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday.

Temperature



Avg. daily departure from normal this month .... +0.3°

Avg. daily departure from normal this year .... +4.6°

Reservoir levels (New York City water supply)

Yesterday 98%
Est. normal 99%

Precipitation (in inches)

Yesterday 0.00
Record 2.18

For the last 30 days
Actual 7.71
Normal 3.86

For the last 365 days
Actual 46.55
Normal 49.52

LAST 30 DAYS

Air pressure

High .... 30.36 noon
Low .... 30.15 1 a.m.

Humidity

High .... 50% 6 a.m.
Low .... 25% noon

Cooling Degree Days

An index of fuel consumption that tracks how far the day's mean temperature rose above 65

Yesterday.. 0
So far this month.................................... 34
So far this season (since January 1) 75
Normal to date for the season 39

Trends

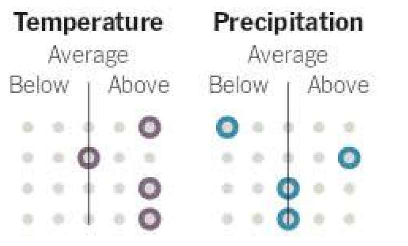


Chart shows how recent temperature and precipitation trends compare with those of the last 30 years.

Recreational Forecast

Sun, Moon and Planets

New	First Quarter	Full	Last Quarter
May 19 11:54 a.m.	May 27	June 3 11:42 p.m.	June 10

Sun	**RISE**	5:35 a.m.	**Moon**	**R**	5:21 a.m.
	SET	8:10 p.m.		**S**	8:35 p.m.
	NEXT R	5:35 a.m.		**R**	5:56 a.m.
Jupiter	**R**	4:23 a.m.	**Mars**	**R**	9:51 a.m.
	S	5:44 p.m.		**S**	12:39 a.m.
Saturn	**R**	2:17 a.m.	**Venus**	**R**	8:24 a.m.
	S	1:10 p.m.		**S**	11:47 p.m.

Boating

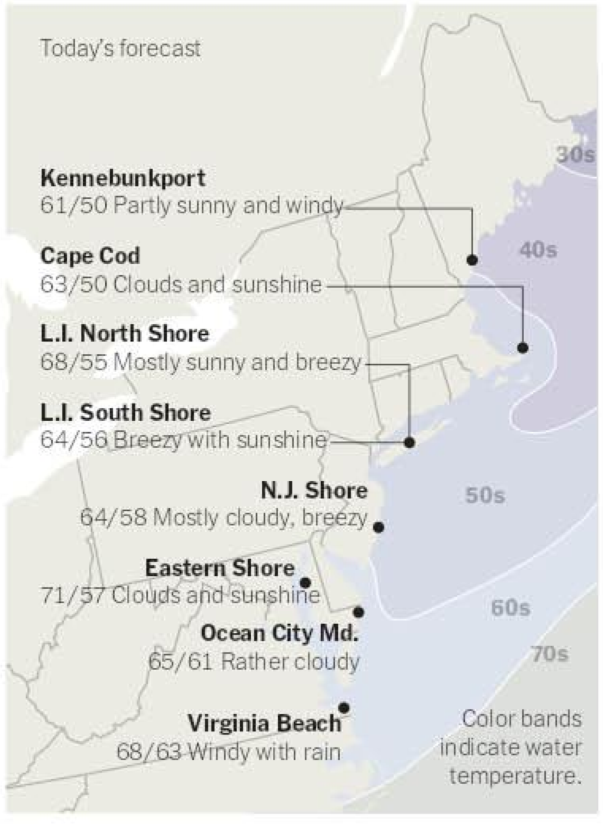
From Montauk Point to Sandy Hook, N.J., out to 20 nautical miles, including Long Island Sound and New York Harbor.

Winds will be out of the southeast at 10-15 knots. Waves will be 1-2 feet on New York Harbor and Long Island Sound and 2-4 feet on the ocean. Visibility will be unrestricted with a mostly cloudy sky.

High Tides

Atlantic City	7:59 a.m.	8:17 p.m.
Barnegat Inlet	8:13 a.m.	8:30 p.m.
The Battery	8:50 a.m.	9:03 p.m.
Beach Haven	9:37 a.m.	9:53 p.m.
Bridgeport	11:54 a.m.	---
City Island	12:21 p.m.	---
Fire Island Lt.	9:05 a.m.	9:21 p.m.
Montauk Point	9:27 a.m.	9:43 p.m.
Northport	12:10 p.m.	---
Port Washington	12:31 p.m.	---
Sandy Hook	8:19 a.m.	8:35 p.m.
Shinnecock Inlet	7:58 a.m.	8:18 p.m.
Stamford	12:04 p.m.	---
Tarrytown	10:39 a.m.	10:52 p.m.
Willets Point	12:18 p.m.	---

Beach and Ocean Temperatures



Breezy along the Northeast coast, with waves building through the day. The northern New England coastline will be dry and mostly sunny. Farther to the south, more clouds than sunshine are expected from Cape Cod to the Delmarva. Rain may move into Virginia Beach in the afternoon.

The New York Times

Open the app.
Open the world.

The New York Times app.
Download now.



3 COURTS
A judge has told Elizabeth Holmes, the disgraced chief of Theranos, that she must report to prison on May 30.

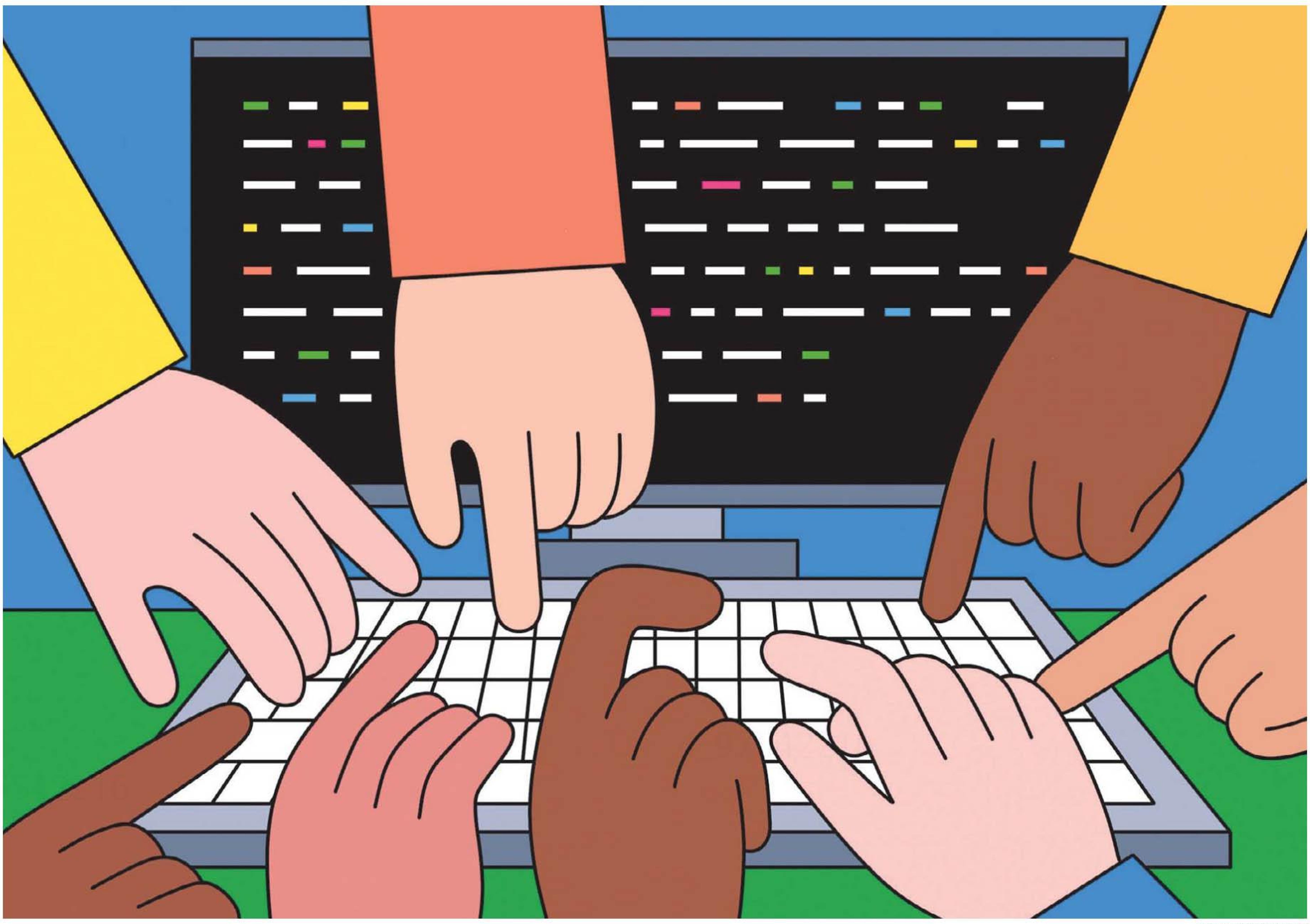
6 TECHNOLOGY
OpenAI has released an iPhone version of its ChatGPT app that can respond to voice commands.



9 SPORTS
Max Strus, left, is one of a league-high nine players on the Miami Heat roster who were bypassed in the draft.

Meta's Big A.I. Giveaway

As the tech giant makes its latest innovation open-source, rivals view it as a dangerous move.



ANDREA CHRONOPOULOS

By CADE METZ and MIKE ISAAC

SAN FRANCISCO — In February, Meta made an unusual move in the rapidly evolving world of artificial intelligence: It decided to give away its A.I. crown jewels.

The Silicon Valley giant, which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, had created an A.I. technology, called LLaMA, that can power online chatbots. But instead of keeping the technology to itself, Meta released the system's underlying computer code into the wild. Academics, government researchers and others who gave their email address to Meta could download the code once the company had vetted the individual.

Essentially, Meta was giving its A.I. technology away as open-source software — computer code that can be freely copied, modified and reused — providing outsiders with everything they needed to quickly build chatbots of their own.

"The platform that will win will be the open one," Yann LeCun, Meta's chief A.I. scientist, said in an interview.

As a race to lead A.I. heats up across Silicon Valley, Meta is standing out from its rivals by taking a different approach to the technology. Driven by its founder and chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, Meta believes that the smartest thing to do is share its underlying A.I. engines as a way to spread its influence and ultimately move faster toward the future.

Its actions contrast with those of Google and OpenAI, the leaders in the A.I. arms race. Worried that A.I. tools like chatbots will be used to spread disinformation, hate speech and other toxic

CONTINUED ON PAGE B6

'Do you want every A.I. system to be under the control of a couple of powerful American companies?'
Yann LeCun, Meta's chief A.I. scientist.

If the U.S. Defaults, Then What?

By JOE RENNISON

The U.S. debt limit has been reached and the Treasury Department is finding ways to save cash. After it runs out of maneuvers, what once seemed unfathomable could become reality: The United States defaults.

What happens next?

The far-reaching effects are hard to fully predict: from shock waves in financial markets to bankruptcies, recession and potentially irreversible damage to the nation's long-held role at the center of the global economy.

The probability of a default remains low, at least based on opposing lawmakers' assurances that a deal will be done to raise or suspend the debt limit and the long odds implied by trading in certain financial markets. But as the day approaches when the United States begins to run out of cash to pay its bills — which could be as soon as June 1 — investors, executives and economists around the world are gaming out what might happen immediately before, during and after, hatching contingency plans and puzzling

CONTINUED ON PAGE B4

Extremism at Home in Gamer Chat Rooms

By STEVEN LEE MYERS and KELLEN BROWNING

There are rules people must agree to before joining Unloved, a private discussion group on Discord, the messaging service popular among players of video games. One rule: "Do not respect women."

For those inside, Unloved serves as a forum where about 150 people embrace a misogynistic subculture in which the members call themselves "incels," a term that describes those who identify as involuntarily celibate. They share some harmless memes but also joke about school shootings and debate the attractiveness of women of different races. Users in the group — known as a server on Discord — can enter smaller rooms for voice or text chats. The name for one of the rooms refers to rape.

In the vast and growing world of gaming, views like these have become easy to come across, both within some games themselves and on social media services and other sites, like Discord and Steam, used by many gamers.

The leak of a trove of classified Pentagon documents on Discord by an Air National Guardsman who harbored extremist views prompted renewed attention to the fringes of the $184 billion gam-

CONTINUED ON PAGE B6



MARLENA SLOSS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Mariana Olaizola Rosenblat, policy adviser on technology and law at the NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights, who wrote a new report.

In Montana, Legal Fight On TikTok

By SAPNA MAHESHWARI and DAVID McCABE

A court battle over First Amendment rights kicked off in Montana on Thursday after a group of TikTok users challenged the state's new TikTok ban, which is set to take effect Jan. 1 and is the first of its kind in the nation.

The TikTok users said in a lawsuit that the law violated their First Amendment rights and claimed that the ban, which Gov. Greg Gianforte signed on Wednesday, far outstripped Montana's legal authority as a state. The lawsuit was filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court but was added to a public court records system on Thursday.

The ban has also set off an outcry from TikTok and civil liberty and digital rights groups. Montana lawmakers and Mr. Gianforte, a Republican, say the ban is necessary to prevent Americans' personal information from falling into the hands of the Chinese government. TikTok is owned by the Chinese company ByteDance.

Under the law, TikTok will be fined for operating the app within

CONTINUED ON PAGE B5

Disney Opts Not to Build In Florida

By BROOKS BARNES

In March, Disney called Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida "anti-business" for his scorched-earth attempt to tighten oversight of the company's theme park resort near Orlando. Last month, when Disney sued the governor and his allies for what it called "a targeted campaign of government retaliation," the company made clear that $17 billion in planned investment in Walt Disney World was on the line.

"Does the state want us to invest more, employ more people, and pay more taxes, or not?" Robert A. Iger, Disney's chief executive, said on an earnings-related conference call with analysts last week.

On Thursday, Mr. Iger and Josh D'Amaro, Disney's theme park and consumer products chairman, showed that they were not bluffing, pulling the plug on an office complex that was scheduled for construction in Orlando at a cost of roughly $1 billion. It would have brought more than 2,000 Disney jobs to the region, with $120,000 as the average salary, ac-

CONTINUED ON PAGE B3

The Digest

COMPANIES

Corporate Bankruptcies Are on Rise, Study Shows

New data shows that 2023 is shaping up to be the biggest year for Chapter 11 bankruptcy filings by U.S. corporations in over a decade, as a potent brew of economic troubles hit financially weakened companies.

More than 230 American companies filed for bankruptcy through April, according to S&P Global, the highest level over the first four months of any year since 2010. That number — which counts public companies with at least $2 million in assets or liabilities and private companies with $10 million in publicly traded debt — doesn't include more recent cases, like Vice Media, Cox Operating and the KKR-backed Envision Healthcare.

Blame a slowing economy, fast-rising interest rates and persistent inflation, all of which have whacked companies struggling under heavy debt burdens and challenged business strategies. (Among the more vulnerable? Companies taken over by private equity firms and loaded up with debt.) Lifelines like rock-bottom interest rates and pandemic-related government aid have also largely disappeared.

Struggling companies began laying off workers a year ago to reduce costs. But they are now "running out of time," S&P analysts wrote in a research note on Wednesday. "Firms that were struggling well before the pandemic and the end of ultralow interest rates have now gone to their breaking point."

Consumer discretionary companies have been the busiest filers, according to S&P. That sector includes retailers and restaurants, typically among the most sensitive businesses to challenging economic conditions. Among the most notable Chapter 11 cases in that area: Bed Bath & Beyond and David's Bridal.

Expect more filings this year as banks cut back on lending, Joe Davis, the chief global economist at Vanguard, warned investors this week. Tighter financial conditions — driven in part by the Fed's extended campaign of rate increases — are expected to persist, potentially forcing companies to pursue more cost cuts, layoffs and, failing that, Chapter 11.

BERNHARD WARNER

EARNINGS

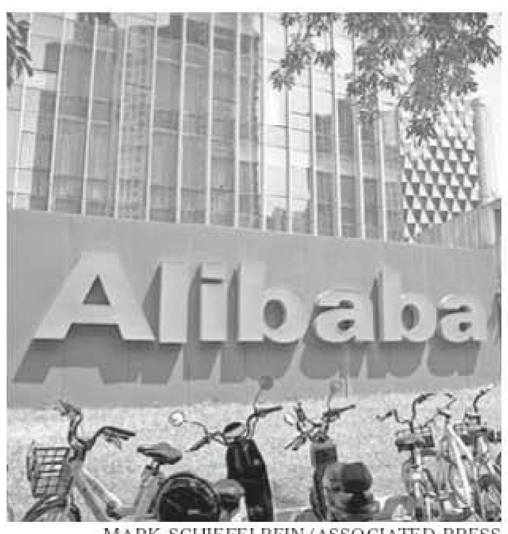
Alibaba's Revenue Misses Expectations for Quarter

Alibaba, the Chinese tech giant, posted a 2 percent rise in quarterly revenue that missed expectations on Thursday and said it would list its cloud computing business in the next year.

The company has been struggling to attract new users as China's e-commerce sector matures and it grapples with inroads made by new competitors.

In March, Alibaba announced plans to restructure into six units after a two-year regulatory crackdown on China's tech sector. It expects all of the units except for its China-facing e-commerce division to seek outside funding and go public.

On Thursday, it approved a full spinoff of the Cloud Intelligence Group via a stock dividend distribution to shareholders, aiming to complete the public listing within the next year.



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alibaba's finance chief, Toby Xu, said the company's board has also approved the process to start external financing for Alibaba International Digital Commerce Business Group. Freshippo, its grocery arm, will kick off the initial public offering process and logistics unit Cainiao will explore an I.P.O. in the next 12-18 months, he added. *REUTERS*

S&P 500 INDEX
+0.9%
4,198.05

DOW JONES INDUSTRIALS
+0.3%
33,535.91

NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX
+1.5%
12,688.84

10-YEAR TREASURY YIELD
3.65%
+0.078 points

CRUDE OIL (U.S.)
$71.94
−$0.95

GOLD (N.Y.)
$1,959.80
−$25.10

Strong Earnings Stretch Market's Rally

By The Associated Press

Stocks rose again on Thursday after more companies reported better profits than expected, while yields climbed after a Federal Reserve official cautioned the end to its interest-rate increases may not arrive as soon as Wall Street hoped.

STOCKS & BONDS

The S&P 500 gained 0.9 percent, adding to its rally from the day before as hopes rise further that the U.S. government can avoid a disastrous default on its debt.

The video-game maker Take-Two Interactive shot to the biggest gain in the S&P 500 after it forecast a huge jump in revenue for the fiscal year following this one. That stoked speculation that Grand Theft Auto VI is on the way, and its stock jumped 11.7 percent.

Bath & Body Works was close behind with a gain of 10.7 percent. It reported stronger revenue and earnings for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

Also helping to support Wall Street was another retailer, Walmart, which rose 1.3 percent after reporting stronger results for the latest quarter than expected. It raised its financial forecast for the full year, though it said it's seeing shoppers remain cautious about spending.

Much scrutiny has been on the retail industry because strong spending by U.S. households has been one of the main pillars keeping the slowing economy out of a recession.

Stocks have remained remarkably resilient since early April despite a long list of worries. A major reason for that is hope the Fed would take it easier on its rate increases, which have slowed inflation at the expense of risking a recession and knocking down prices across financial markets.

The widespread bet was that the Fed would take a pause at its next meeting in June. But Lorie Logan, the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, cooled some of those hopes in a prepared speech for the Texas Bankers Association.

"The data in coming weeks could yet show that it is appropriate to skip a meeting," she said. "As of today, though, we aren't there yet."

Treasury yields climbed as traders increased bets that the Fed would raise rates again at its June meeting, though the majority are still forecasting a pause.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 3.64 percent from 3.57 percent late Wednesday. The two-year yield, which moves more on expectations for the Fed, rose to 4.25 percent from 4.16 percent.

Higher rates have already slowed swaths of the economy and helped lead to three of the largest U.S. bank failures in history since March. Reports on the economy on Thursday came in mixed.

One showed that fewer workers applied for unemployment benefits last week than expected. While that is good news for workers and for a so-far solid job market, it could also result in upward pressure on inflation. That is what the Fed has been trying desperately to lower by cranking its benchmark interest rate to the highest level since 2007.

A separate report said that manufacturing in the mid-Atlantic region is continuing to weaken, though not quite as badly as economists expected.

Cisco Systems stock swung between small gains and losses through the day after the company reported stronger results for the latest quarter than expected and raised its forecast for the current quarter. Analysts said some investors may be disappointed because of worries about lower-than-expected growth in the following fiscal year. Its stock ended with a gain of 1.2 percent.

The majority of companies in the S&P 500 have reported stronger profits for the first three months of the year than analysts expected. But they are still on track to report a second straight quarter of weaker earnings than a year earlier, according to FactSet.

In stock markets abroad, indexes rose in much of Europe and Asia after Wall Street's rally from Wednesday spread westward.

The S&P 500 Index

Position of the S&P 500 index at 1-minute intervals on Thursday

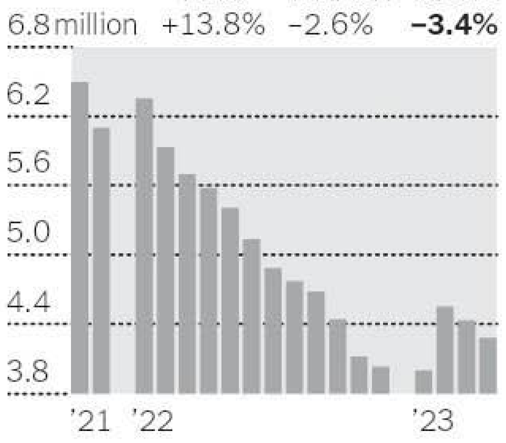
-- Previous Close: 4,158.77



Source: FactSet THE NEW YORK TIMES

Existing-Home Sales

Annual pace of existing single-family homes sold during the month, seasonally adjusted.

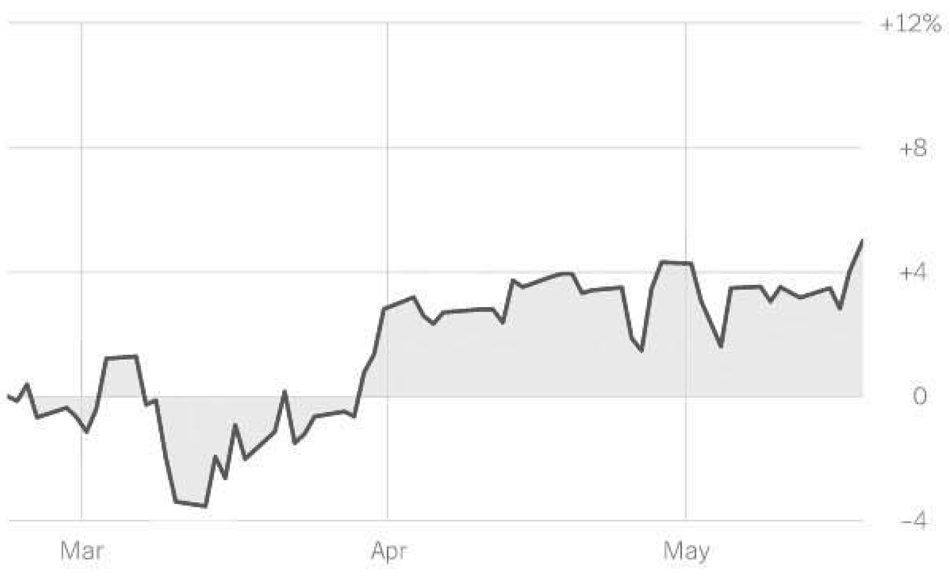


Source: National Association of Realtors THE NEW YORK TIMES

What Happened in Stock Markets Yesterday

POWERED BY FACTSET

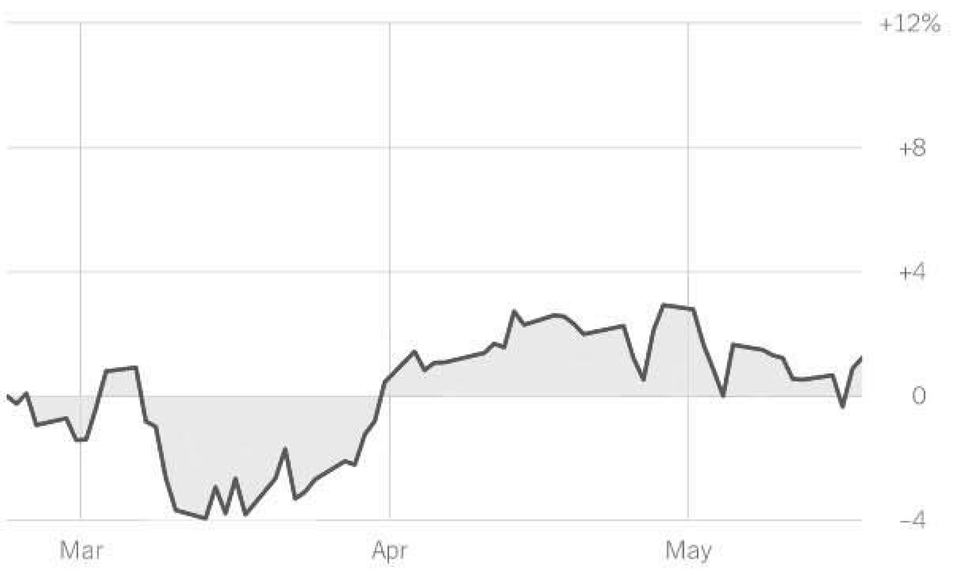
S&P 500 4,198.05 ↑ +0.9%
3 month performance: **+5.0%**



Nasdaq Composite Index 12,688.84 ↑ +1.5%
3 month performance: **+10.4%**



Dow Jones Industrials 33,535.91 ↑ +0.3%
3 month performance: **+1.2%**



Best performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. Take-Two Interactive (TTWO)	$139.63	+11.7%
2. Bath & Body Works (BBWI)	$37.67	+10.7
3. Netflix (NFLX)	$371.29	+9.2
4. Synopsys (SNPS)	$409.71	+8.7
5. Copart (CPRT)	$88.37	+7.8
6. Cadence Design Systems (CDNS)	$216.84	+6.2
7. EQT Corp (EQT)	$36.84	+5.8
8. NVIDIA (NVDA)	$316.78	+5.0
9. Capital One (COF)	$99.23	+4.8
10. Western Digital (WDC)	$38.74	+4.8

Worst performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. TARGET CORP (TGT)	$154.18	−4.2%
2. Molina Healthcare (MOH)	$284.83	−3.6
3. Newmont (NEM)	$43.27	−3.3
4. Insulet Corp. (PODD)	$302.87	−3.3
5. ETSY (ETSY)	$92.39	−2.7
6. The Cigna Group (CI)	$256.49	−2.6
7. Conagra Brands (CAG)	$35.80	−2.4
8. T-Mobile US (TMUS)	$138.18	−2.4
9. Centene (CNC)	$65.80	−2.1
10. American Tower (AMT)	$191.03	−1.9

Most active

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE	VOLUME IN MIL.
1. Tesla (TSLA)	$176.89	+1.7%	108
2. Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)	$107.93	+4.0	74
3. NVIDIA (NVDA)	$316.78	+5.0	74
4. Amazon.com (AMZN)	$118.15	+2.3	70
5. Apple (AAPL)	$175.05	+1.4	65
6. Bank of America (BAC)	$28.47	−0.4	51
7. Cisco Systems (CSCO)	$48.20	+1.2	41
8. AT&T Inc. (T)	$16.55	−0.7	39
9. Ford Motor (F)	$11.64	+1.2	38
10. Intel Corp (INTC)	$29.68	+2.8	36

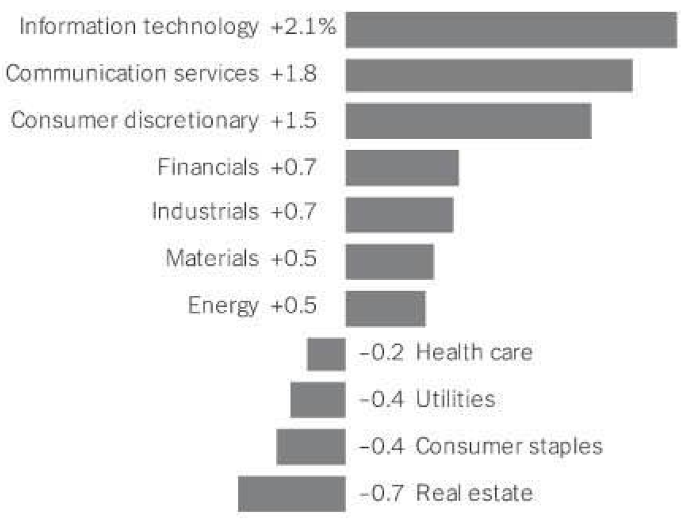
Specialty stocks and commodities

	TOTAL RETURN 1 YR	TOTAL RETURN 5 YRS	TOTAL ASSETS IN BIL.
1. Vanguard Real Estate Index Fund Investor Shares (VGSIX)	−16.5%	+5.6%	62.8
2. Vanguard Information Technology Index Fund Admiral Shares (VITAX)	+5.6	+18.8	53.1
3. Vanguard Health Care Fund Admiral Shares (VGHAX)	+10.8	+10.9	48.4
4. Vanguard Health Care Index Fund Admiral Shares (VHCIX)	+4.0	+11.3	20.2
5. T. Rowe Price Health Sciences Fund I Class (THISX)	+6.4	+11.1	15.9
6. Calamos Market Neutral Income Fund Class C (CVSCX)	+2.1	+2.2	14.4
7. Fidelity Select Software & IT Services Portfolio (FSCSX)	+1.3	+14.1	9.4
8. Fidelity Select Technology Portfolio (FSPTX)	+2.1	+15.2	9.3
9. BlackRock Health Sciences Opportunities Portfolio Service Shares (SHISX)	+5.9	+11.1	8.9
10. Columbia Seligman Technology and Information Fund Class C (SCICX)	−4.4	+15.8	8.7

Source: Morningstar

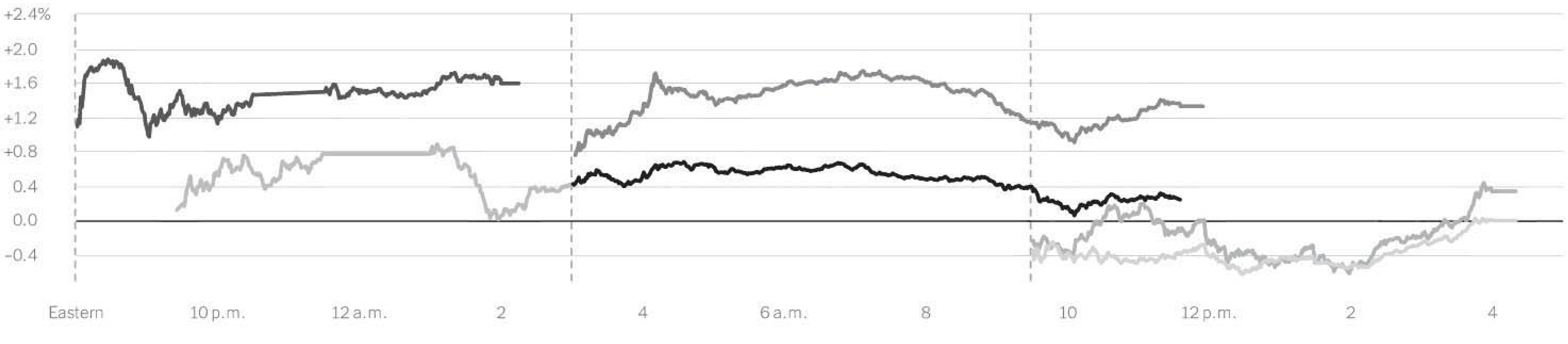
Sector performance

S&P 500 SECTORS



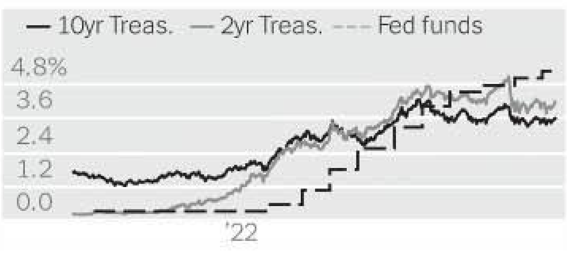
How stock markets fared yesterday in Asia ... **... in Europe** **... and North America**

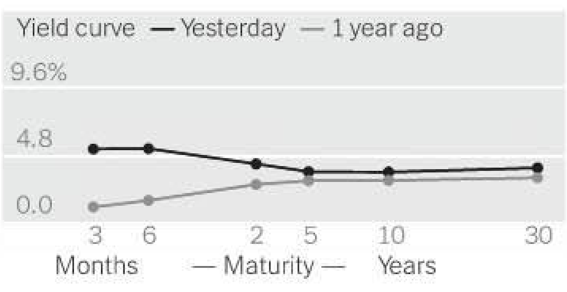
— Nikkei 225 (Japan): +1.6%
— Shanghai Composite (Shanghai): +0.4%
— FTSE 100 (London): +0.2%
— DAX (Frankfurt): +1.3%
— Dow Jones Industrials (New York): +0.3%
— S&P/TSX (Toronto): +0.0%



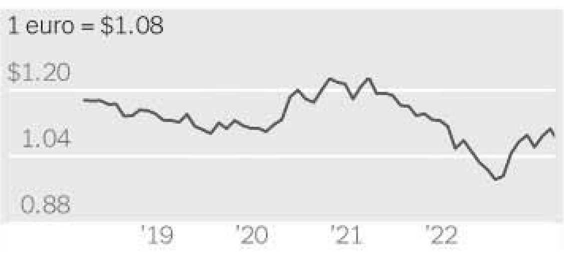
What Is Happening in Other Markets and the Economy

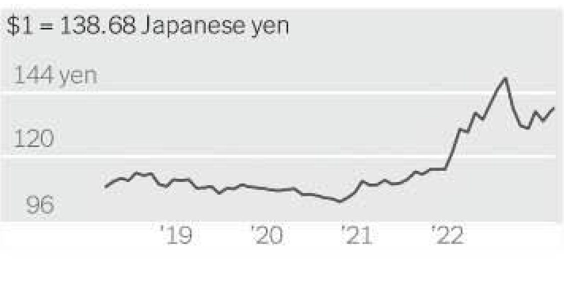
Bonds



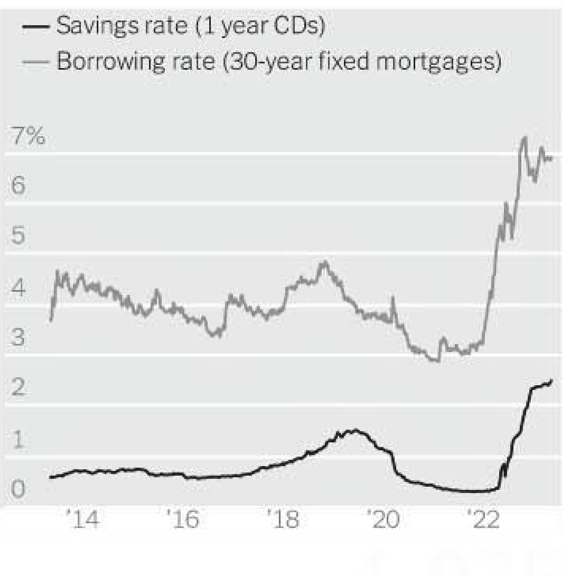


Currencies



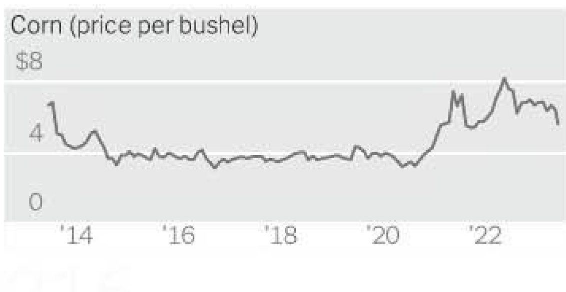


Consumer rates

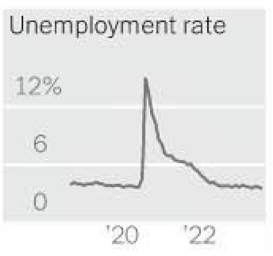


Commodities

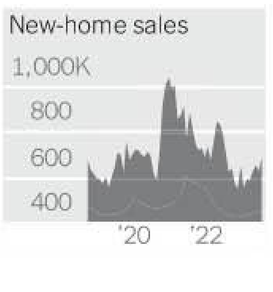


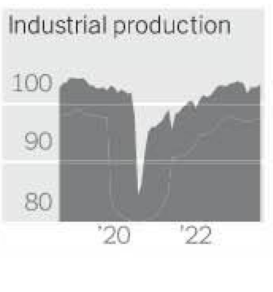


Economy









Disney Pulls the Plug On an Office Complex It Planned for Florida

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

cording to an estimate from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

The project, near Lake Nona Town Center, was supposed to cost $864 million, but recent estimates have been closer to $1.3 billion. Disney had planned to relocate as many as 2,000 employees from Southern California, including most of a department known as Imagineering, which works with Disney's movie studios to develop theme park attractions.

Most of the affected employees complained bitterly about having to move — some quit — but Disney held firm, partly because of a Florida tax credit that would have allowed the company to recoup as much as $570 million over 20 years.

When he announced the project in 2021, Mr. D'Amaro cited "Florida's business-friendly climate" as justification.

Mr. D'Amaro's tone in an email to employees on Thursday was notably chillier. He cited "changing business conditions" as a reason for canceling the Lake Nona project. "I remain optimistic about the direction of our Walt Disney World business," Mr. D'Amaro said in the memo. He noted that $17 billion was still earmarked for construction at Disney World over the next decade — growth that would create an estimated 13,000 jobs. "I hope we're able to," he said.

The memo, which was viewed by The New York Times, did not mention Mr. DeSantis. But the company's battle with the governor and his allies in the Florida Legislature figured prominently into Disney's decision to cancel the Lake Nona project, according to two people briefed on the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private deliberations. A spokeswoman for Mr. Iger said he was not available for an interview.

A spokesman for Mr. DeSantis said in an email: "Disney announced the possibility of a Lake Nona campus nearly two years ago. Nothing ever came of the project, and the state was unsure whether it would come to fruition. Given the company's financial straits, falling market cap and declining stock price, it is unsurprising that they would restructure their business operations and cancel unsuccessful ventures."



DISNEY

The project, near Orlando's Lake Nona Town Center, above, was expected to involve the relocation of Disney employees from Southern California.

Florida officials have repeatedly pointed to the Lake Nona development as an example of economic vibrancy in Orlando, which suffered mightily during the pandemic. Noting that hotel chains and retailers were moving into the Lake Nona area in anticipation of Disney's arrival, The Orlando Business Journal in January called the complex "a major economic driver for the region."

Disney has already incurred millions of dollars in expenses related to the project, including relocation costs for about 200 employees who have already moved to Florida from California. Mr. D'Amaro said in his note that the company would discuss options with those workers, "including the possibility of moving you back."

The Lake Nona campus, about 20 miles from Disney World near the Orlando International Airport, had been championed by Bob Chapek, who served as Disney's chief executive from 2020 until he was fired last year. Mr. Iger, who came out of retirement to retake Disney's reins, was much less enthusiastic about the project — even before the company became mired in its battle with Mr. DeSantis. As soon as he returned to Disney, Mr. Iger began telling lieutenants, for instance, that it made little sense to move Imagineering so far away from Disney's movie studios. As he is fond of saying, "Creative teams need to be together."

Disney is also in the midst of cutting $5.5 billion in costs as it seeks to improve profitability, pay down debt and restore its dividend. Later on Thursday, for instance, Disney said it would close an underperforming luxury hotel at Disney World.

Disney shares closed at about $94 on Thursday, down about 45 percent from two years ago.

Mr. DeSantis and Disney have been sparring for more than a year over a special tax district that encompasses Disney World. The fight started when the company criticized a Florida education law that opponents labeled "Don't Say Gay" because it limits classroom instruction about gender identity and sexual orientation — angering Mr. DeSantis, who repeatedly vowed payback.

Since then, Florida legislators, at the urging of Mr. DeSantis, have targeted Disney — the state's largest taxpayer — with a variety of hostile measures. In February, they ended Disney's long-held ability to self-govern its 25,000-acre resort as if it were a county by giving Mr. DeSantis control over government services at the resort.

It was soon discovered that the previous, Disney-controlled board had approved development contracts that lock in a growth plan for the resort. An effort to void those agreements has since resulted in dueling lawsuits, with Disney suing Mr. DeSantis and his allies in federal court and the governor's tax district appointees returning fire in state court.

Holmes's Bid To Remain Free on Bail Is Rejected

By LORA KELLEY

Elizabeth Holmes, the disgraced founder of the failed blood testing start-up Theranos, who was convicted last year on charges that she defrauded investors of more than $100 million, has lost her latest bid to stay out of prison while she appeals her conviction.



Holmes

Ms. Holmes, whose case cast a harsh light on Silicon Valley's culture of hubris, must report to prison on May 30, a judge ruled after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit rejected her attempt on Tuesday to remain free on bail.

Ms. Holmes and her top lieutenant at Theranos, Ramesh Balwani, who was found guilty of fraud in a separate trial and who began serving his prison sentence last month, were also ordered to pay $452 million in restitution to victims of the company's fraud.

Of that total, the judge, Edward J. Davila of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, who oversaw both trials, determined that Ms. Holmes and Mr. Balwani should pay $125 million to the media mogul Rupert Murdoch, who invested in Theranos.

Walgreens and Safeway, which had entered into business deals with the company, were also identified as victims for the purposes of restitution.

Why It Matters

Theranos raised nearly a billion dollars from investors for technology that the company said could test for a wide range of illnesses with just a few drops of a patient's blood. After those claims turned out to be false, both Ms. Holmes and Mr. Balwani were accused of defrauding investors.

Their convictions and sentencing — 11 years for Ms. Holmes, 13 for Mr. Balwani — has contributed to the feeling in Silicon Valley that the era of the "fake it till you make it" approach may be winding down. Ms. Holmes, who dropped out of Stanford to start the company, hit a paper net worth of $4.5 billion and had celebrity backers. Her precipitous downfall has been documented extensively in television shows, podcasts and documentaries.

Background

Ms. Holmes is appealing her conviction, a process that delayed her prison start date, which was originally set for April 27. Last month, Judge Davila denied a last-minute request from Ms. Holmes to remain free pending her appeal.

Ms. Holmes was convicted last year on four felony counts of defrauding investors.

Mr. Balwani, who is also known as Sunny, was Ms. Holmes's close professional associate and one-time romantic partner. He was convicted in a trial last year on 10 counts of wire fraud and two counts of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, a verdict that was more severe than that of Ms. Holmes. His legal team has filed an appeal of his conviction.

What's Next

Ms. Holmes is to surrender to authorities after the Memorial Day weekend. She had originally been ordered to report to Federal Prison Camp in Bryan, Texas. She has been living in California with her partner, Billy Evans, and their two young children.

Unions Accuse Hospital Group of Wielding Clout Against Workers

By REED ABELSON

A coalition of labor groups on Thursday filed an antitrust complaint with the Justice Department against UPMC, the giant Pittsburgh-based hospital employer, accusing the system of using its enormous clout to depress wages and harm workers.

In its complaint, the group, which includes S.E.I.U. Healthcare Pennsylvania, claims UPMC workers are subject to a "wage penalty" because of the health system's dominance in local markets. The complaint describes nurses who are given heavier workloads than nurses at other hospitals, creating concerns over patient safety, and catalogs what the coalition considers to be labor law violations that it says illustrate the powerlessness of employees to improve working conditions.

"We have watched UPMC grow and amass power," said Matthew Yarnell, the president of the S.E.I.U. group there, which has long sought to organize workers at the health system, which is largely not unionized. After a series of acquisitions, it is Pennsylvania's largest private employer with more than 40 hospitals, 800 doctors' offices and clinics, and a health plan. With operating revenue of $26 billion last year, it employs about 95,000 people.

While antitrust cases frequently address how powerful organizations can operate as monopolies and unfairly raise prices, a company can also be accused of operating as a monopsony in which it exerts unfair leverage over suppliers, including employees.

Health care and legal experts say this is a novel legal approach to consider the effects on workers of widespread consolidation in the health industry.

In the complaint, the unions claim that UPMC's monopsony power has also prevented workers "from exiting or improving these working conditions through a draconian system of mobility restrictions and widespread labor law violations that lock in subcompetitive pay and working conditions."

Reached for comment, a spokesman for UPMC did not directly address the unions' claim that it violated antitrust law, but defended its treatment of employees. The system "is among the best places to work in all the regions we served," Paul Wood, UPMC's chief communications officer, said in an email. He said the system's average wage was more than $78,000 annually.

"There are no other employers of size and scope in the regions

UPMC owns more than 40 hospitals in Pennsylvania.

UPMC serves that provide good paying jobs at every level and an average wage of this magnitude," he added.

He also said that the health system assigned nurses based on patient need and that there was no policy that would prohibit an employee who left one facility from being rehired at another one.

But federal regulators have signaled an increased willingness to look at the effects of an employer's market power on workers, and concern about how consolidation affects labor markets "is gaining a lot of momentum and attention," said Jaime King, a law professor at the University of Auckland and an antitrust expert.

"The problem is much bigger than a single merger in a single market," said Marka Peterson, legal director for Strategic Organizing Center, a labor coalition formerly known as the Change to Win Federation, which is also filing the claim.

The Justice Department could decide whether to undertake its own investigation and whether any charges would be warranted.

Increasing consolidation in the health care industry has focused some attention on fallout among the work force. Some research into hospital mergers has shown a reduction in nurses' wages. "Health care stands out as being concentrated on both sides," said Kate Bahn, an economist and research director at the Urban Institute.

And health care workers, many of whom suffered severe burnout during the pandemic, are in short supply across the industry. The high workloads led to numerous strikes by nurses, including recent walkouts at New York City hospitals.

UPMC has often been criticized for what some describe as anticompetitive conduct, and a report released this year echoed some of the issues raised in the complaint.

But whether the Justice Department will pursue action against the health system remains to be seen. While federal regulators may appear sympathetic to the theory underlying the unions' complaint, these cases are challenging. "Monopsony cases are not new, but they are very hard to prove," said Matthew L. Cantor, an antitrust lawyer and partner at Constantine Cannon.

This would be the first case to rely primarily on the argument that a powerful health care employer is using its clout in ways that harm workers, and prosecutors must decide whether they have strong enough evidence to take action. "They're not going to want to fight a case they don't think they can win," said Elena Prager, an economist at the Simon Business School at the University of Rochester who has served as a visiting scholar with the Justice Department.

Walmart Raises Its Outlook as Shoppers Look for Bargains Amid Inflation

By JORDYN HOLMAN

Walmart, the largest retailer in the United States, raised its annual guidance on Thursday, a sign that it expects shoppers to continue to gravitate toward its value-oriented stores as they become more selective about their purchases.

The retailer said it expected net sales to increase 3.5 percent for the fiscal year and operating income to rise up to 4.5 percent.

Revenue in the first quarter was $152.3 billion, beating Wall Street's estimate of $141.7 billion. Both the transactions and average amount customers spent rose in the quarter.

Higher-income households and younger customers are shopping more at Walmart, the company said, reflecting a trend that its executives have called out in recent quarters as Americans face higher-than-usual inflation. The retailer said it had also gained market share in the grocery category.

"We had a strong quarter," said Doug McMillon, Walmart's chief executive, in a statement on Thursday.

On a call with analysts, Mr. McMillon said inflation was slowing down consumer spending in discretionary categories like apparel and home goods. That, in turn, is causing uncertainty for Walmart executives as they plan for the year ahead.

"We all need those prices to come down," Mr. McMillon said. "The persistently high rates of inflation in these categories, lasting for such a long period of time, are weighing on some of the families we serve."

Retail earnings reports this week provided a glimpse into the mind-set of the American consumer and the state of the industry. Target, Home Depot and TJX, which owns T.J. Maxx and Marshalls, all reported first-quarter earnings that showed sales had moderated compared with the past few years, when shoppers were spending more freely.



EDUARDO MUNOZ ALVAREZ/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Walmart's top executive said higher prices were causing shoppers to pull back from purchases of discretionary items like clothes and home goods.

Home Depot on Tuesday lowered its full-year guidance and said sales in the first quarter declined 4.2 percent from a year earlier. Executives said they had expected 2023 would be a "year of moderation" for the home improvement sector, but the company's performance was below expectations.

Target's quarterly sales increased a modest 0.5 percent. The retailer maintained its full-year guidance, but said that "based on softening sales trends" in the most recent quarter, it was planning for a wide range of sales outcomes in the second quarter.

Overall sales at T.J. Maxx's parent company increased 3 percent. Its T.J. Maxx and Marshalls brands, which offer name-brand items to shoppers at discounted prices, posted an increase, but sales at HomeGoods declined 7 percent. It maintained its full-year guidance and forecast an increase in sales of 2 to 3 percent.

Analysts said the sales declines were a sign of consumers being more selective about what they bought, along with spending patterns gaining some semblance of normalcy after being less predictable during the pandemic. Broadly, the economy has remained resilient, with wage growth strong and jobs being added across a wide range of industry.

"We're not seeing a collapse of revenue," Simeon Siegel, managing director at BMO Capital Markets, said. "We're seeing revenue disappointments. Consumers are still spending on the things that they decide they want to spend on."

Retailers are facing a profit challenge. Walmart said on Thursday that its gross profit rate, or the difference between the cost of the goods and their sales, had fallen to 23.7 percent, slightly missing Wall Street's estimates. The rate declined in part because shoppers were buying more groceries and products in Walmart's health and wellness category and less general merchandise. Groceries typically have lower profit margins than discretionary categories like apparel.

Target said on Wednesday that its gross margin rate increased to 26.3 percent from a year earlier, when it had a glut of inventory and supply chain costs were higher. It said higher prices had also helped lift that number. But Target warned that shrink, the term for inventory that entered a store or warehouse but left without being accounted for, would hurt its profitability by more than $500 million compared with last year.

Retail analysts have expected thinner company margins this quarter, given more promotions to entice shoppers and more purchases of items, like groceries, that bring in lower profits.

That consumer behavior was reflected in this week's retail sales report for April. Retail sales increased at a modest 0.4 percent from March, reversing a two-month decline. (The number is not adjusted for inflation and sometimes is revised.)

Department stores, health and personal care stores, and grocery stores all recorded increases. Spending at furniture stores, electronic stores and home improvement retailers declined. Spending at restaurants and bars increased 14.5 percent.

Restaurants and flights are usually considered discretionary, but they are also experiences, which Americans are spending more on. There is less emphasis on buying big-ticket items for the home given that many shoppers spent the early stages of the pandemic doing just that.

"Part of what we're experiencing now is a bit of a rebalancing in the consumer budget," said Michelle Meyer, chief economist at Mastercard. "As we look forward, should we expect this split between experiences and goods to last forever? Of course not. But there's still more catch-up that needs to happen for some of these experience-based spending categories where consumers are still very eager to satisfy their lingering demand."

Some analysts, though, warn that a confluence of factors — including less money in savings, tightening credit and continued high prices — will make shoppers pull back later in the year.

Michael Lasser, a retail analyst at UBS, said the "very clear pattern" with retailers' earnings results this week showed that consumers were being more discerning about what they purchased.

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

INVESTMENT PROPERTIES (600)

Investment Properties Other Areas 605

FLORIDA, WPB. Class A Investment. 2 luxury tenanted condos. The Villas At Emerald Dunes. NOI $27,606. Cap Rate: 4.4%, going in. Email: garysmith.pp@gmail.com for full listing details

UCC PUBLIC SALE NOTICE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on July 19, 2023 commencing at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (the "Sale Date"), via audio/video teleconference the details of which will be provided to interested parties in advance of the Sale Date pursuant to the Terms of Public Sale (described below), based upon the occurrence of one or more Events of Default under certain documents (the "Loan Documents") copies of which are available for inspection as hereinafter described, pursuant to such Loan Documents, as amended, and Article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code as enacted in the State of New York, Motcomb Estates Ltd. ("Secured Party") shall dispose of, by public sale, the right, title, and interest of MVS Mezz LLC ("Pledgor") in and to the following assets (collectively, the "Collateral"): (i) one hundred percent (100%) of the limited liability company interests in SB Hospitality, LLC, a Florida limited liability company ("Pledged Entity"); and (ii) all other assets pledged by Pledgor under the Loan Documents. The public sale shall be conducted by Mannion Auctions, LLC, by William Mannion, Auctioneer, NYC DCA License No. 796322, and/or Matthew D. Mannion, Auctioneer, NYC DCA License No. 1434494, or such other auctioneer licensed in the State of New York as is selected by Secured Party in its sole and absolute discretion.

Based upon information provided by Pledgor, Pledged Entity, and certain other persons and entities affiliated therewith, it is the understanding of Secured Party (but without any representation or warranty by Secured Party as to the accuracy or completeness of the following matters) that: (i) Pledgor owns one hundred percent (100%) of the limited liability company membership interests in Pledged Entity (the "Membership Interests"); (ii) Pledged Entity has good, marketable and insurable fee simple title in and to the real property comprising part of each parcel of real property located at 1111-1119 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, Florida 33139 (the "Premises"), as more particularly described in the Loan Documents; and (iii) the Premises are encumbered by and subject to an Amended and Restated Mortgage, Assignment of Leases and Rents, Security Agreement and Fixture Filing (the "Mortgage") held by Secured Party securing indebtedness under the Loan Documents in the original principal amount of $27,500,000.00.

The Collateral is offered "AS IS, WHERE IS", with all faults, and Secured Party makes no guarantee, representation, or warranty (including, without limitation, any representation or warranty of merchantability or fitness), express or implied, of any kind or nature whatsoever.

Secured Party will be permitted to bid at the sale, and notwithstanding any requirement herein that the sale of the Collateral be for cash, Secured Party may credit bid all or any portion of the outstanding balance of the amounts due under the Loan Documents. Secured Party reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to (a) reject all bids and terminate the sale or adjourn the sale to such other date and time as Secured Party may deem proper, by announcement at the place and on the date of sale, and any subsequent adjournment thereof, without further publication, and (b) impose any other commercially reasonable conditions upon the sale of the Collateral as Secured Party may deem proper in its sole and absolute discretion.

The Membership Interests are unregistered securities under the Securities Act of 1933 as amended. Because of this, each prospective bidder seeking to be a "Qualified Bidder" (as determined by Secured Party in its sole and absolute discretion) shall be required, among other things, to execute and deliver to Secured Party a "Bidding Certificate" certifying, among other things, that such bidder: (i) will acquire the Collateral for investment purposes, solely for its own account and not with a view to distribution or resale; (ii) is an accredited investor within the meaning of the applicable securities laws; (iii) has sufficient knowledge and experience in financial and business matters so as to be capable of evaluating the merits and risks of investment and has sufficient financial means to afford the risk of investment in the Collateral; and (iv) will not resell or otherwise hypothecate the Collateral without either a valid registration under applicable federal or state laws, including without limitation the Securities Act of 1933 as amended, or an available exemption therefrom.

The public sale of the Collateral shall be subject to the further terms and conditions set forth in the "Terms of Public Sale" (including without limitation terms and conditions with respect to the availability of additional information, bidding requirements, deposit amounts, bidding procedures, and the consummation of the public sale), which are available online at www.1111CollinsAveUCCSale.com and by contacting: Jones Lang LaSalle Americas, Inc., 330 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10017, Attn: Brett Rosenberg, tel. (212) 812-5926, email Brett.Rosenberg@jll.com.

Regulators Rebut the Claims of Silicon Valley Bank's Ex-C.E.O.

By EMILY FLITTER and ALAN RAPPEPORT

When asked in a Senate hearing this week who was to blame for the demise of Silicon Valley Bank, the lender's former chief executive, Greg Becker, had plenty of ideas, blaming regulators, the bank's board and its own customers for bringing it down.

On Thursday, senior officials from two of the bank's main regulators, the Federal Reserve and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, told members of the same Senate panel that some of the impressions Mr. Becker had left lawmakers with were false.

The contradictory congressional testimony threatened to pose yet another problem for Mr. Becker, who is facing an investigation by federal criminal prosecutors into his handling of the failed California lender as well as a shareholder lawsuit accusing him another senior leader of misleading investors about the bank's health in the lead-up to its failure.

James N. Kramer, a lawyer for Mr. Becker, said Mr. Becker stood by the statements he had made.

The regulators' statements were part of a hearing held by the Senate Banking Committee on how bank oversight should look in the future in light of the failures of three regional banks this spring. It came two days after Mr. Becker appeared alongside former senior leaders of Signature Bank, a New York lender that collapsed just after Silicon Valley Bank did and prompted the federal government to take drastic steps to prevent widespread panic in the banking system.

Senators on Thursday asked the regulators in charge of overseeing Silicon Valley Bank about two exchanges Mr. Becker had with committee members earlier in the week.

During the first exchange on Tuesday, Senator Thom Tillis, Republican of North Carolina, asked Mr. Becker to describe how his bank had responded to problems regulators had flagged in its risk management practices. Mr. Tillis brought up a list of items regulators referred to as "matters requiring attention" and asked Mr. Becker to describe how they were handled.

"We were working on them aggressively," Mr. Becker said. "To my memory, by the middle of '22, the vast majority of those findings had already been remediated. And, I believe, even in early '23 my recollection is there was roughly one of those findings that were outstanding so the team again from my standpoint was very responsive to the regulatory feedback."

On Thursday, Senator Mike Rounds, Republican of North Dakota, asked the Fed's vice chair for supervision, Michael Barr, whether the problems really had been fixed. Mr. Barr said that they had not.

To that, Mr. Kramer responded, "Mr. Becker was referring to feedback he received from the internal team at SVB" and had never meant to suggest that regulators had signed off on the completion of the matters.

Also at issue was whether Mr. Becker had been able to help find a buyer for his failed bank. In his written testimony to the committee, Mr. Becker said he had "made every effort to ensure that SVB's customers and employees would be protected, and worked to minimize, or eliminate, any loses that might result from the F.D.I.C.'s takeover of SVB."

At a Senate hearing, the testimony is contradictory.

On Tuesday, Senator Bill Hagerty, Republican of Tennessee, asked Mr. Becker whether officials had let him help find a buyer.

"I offered several times to engage potential acquirers," Mr. Becker told Mr. Hagerty.

"Did they ever consult you? You said you offered, but did the F.D.I.C. consult with you?" Mr. Hagerty asked.

"They did not," Mr. Becker replied.

On Thursday, Mr. Hagerty asked regulators whether that was true.

"It's my understanding that F.D.I.C. staff actually did meet with Mr. Becker on I believe it was the Saturday to get input from him," said the chairman of the F.D.I.C., Martin Gruenberg, who added that staff members "got input from him on potential acquirers of the institution."

"Interesting," Mr. Hagerty replied. "That's contrary to what he said."

"He stands by his testimony that they did not consult with him," Mr. Kramer said.

The hearing came a month after federal regulators released reports that laid out the roots of the problems at Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank and the acknowledged regulatory lapses that allowed those problems to fester. The regulators said that both banks were poorly managed and were unprepared for the risks associated with rising interest rates, but noted the Federal Reserve and the F.D.I.C. were too slow in responding to red flags.

Republicans on the committee pushed the regulators for answers and in some cases accused them of blaming the Trump administration's loosening of bank regulations for causing the recent turmoil.

Senator John Kennedy, Republican of Louisiana, accused Mr. Barr for seeking more authority to regulate banks after failing to successfully safeguard the banking system.

Mr. Barr insisted that he was seeking no new powers and, in fact, was committing to doing a better job.

"I am not seeking any additional authority or power or money from this committee," Mr. Barr said. "We are going to use our existing authority to strengthen supervision and regulation to make it less likely that this kind of event happens in the future."

Catastrophic Default Day Is Nearing, But Yellen Can't Say Precisely When

By ALAN RAPPEPORT

WASHINGTON — In letters to Congress and warnings to business leaders about the catastrophic consequences if the United States defaults on its debt, Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen has repeatedly offered an important caveat.

She cannot give the exact date when the federal government will run out of cash.

The United States reached its statutory $31.4 trillion debt limit on Jan. 19, forcing the Treasury Department — which borrows huge sums of money to pay the nation's bills — to begin using accounting maneuvers known as extraordinary measures to conserve cash and avoid breaching the cap.

On Monday, Ms. Yellen reiterated warnings that the Treasury Department could deplete its cash reserves by June 1. Still, the exact day when the United States will reach the so-called X-date is nearly impossible to determine.

"These estimates are based on currently available data, and federal receipts, outlays and debt could vary from these estimates," Ms. Yellen has told lawmakers in her letters. "The actual date Treasury exhausts extraordinary measures could be a number of days or weeks later than these estimates."

While Treasury has the most sophisticated cash management system in the world and employs teams of highly trained economists, its coffers are a blur of payments going out and tax revenues coming in. When its cash balance runs painfully low — as was the case on Wednesday, when the Treasury General Account started the day with less than $100 billion — pinpointing the X-date becomes even harder to predict. In many respects, that is because the moment that a default would occur is a moving target.

Big bills are coming due.

Ms. Yellen has been eyeing early June as a pivotal month since her first warnings to Congress about the debt limit in January. The reason: The federal government spends a lot of money in a short period around June 1, and it is impossible to predict exactly how much revenue is going to be coming in and when.

In a report published on Thursday, the Bipartisan Policy Center, a think tank that carefully tracks federal spending, estimated that the government will spend $101 billion on June 1. Most of that money — $47 billion — will go toward Medicare, while the rest will be directed to veterans' benefits, military pay and retirement, civil service retirement, and supplemental security income. On June 2, the government has to pay $25 billion in Social Security benefits and $2 billion for Medicaid.

During those two days, the government is projected to spend about $140 billion and bring in only $44 billion in tax revenue, leaving the nation's coffers operating on fumes.

Revenues sputter as refunds flow.

One big problem this year is that tax revenues have been coming in more slowly than anticipated.

Severe storms, flooding and mudslides in California, Alabama and Georgia prompted the Internal Revenue Service to push the April 18 tax-filing deadlines in dozens of counties to October.

Another surprising reason that cash is running lower than some budget experts projected is that the I.R.S. is starting to operate more efficiently. As a result of the $80 billion that the agency received as part of the Inflation Reduction Act last year, it has been able to ramp up hiring and chip away at the backlog of unprocessed tax returns.

Because the I.R.S. has been processing returns more quickly, it is also paying out refunds more quickly and draining the amount of available cash.



HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen says the X-date is an estimate.

June 15 is a critical day.

If Ms. Yellen can find enough coins in Treasury's couch to pay the bills until June 15, the United States could find itself with a bit of breathing room.

That is because June 15 is when third-quarter payments are due from corporations and people who are required to pay their tax bills throughout the year or choose to make payments every three months to avoid having large bills due in April.

The Congressional Budget Office said in a report last week that an expected influx of quarterly tax receipts on June 15 and the availability of additional extraordinary measures would probably allow the government to continue financing operations through at least the end of July.

The government could receive some $80 billion in tax revenue that day. The Bipartisan Policy Center estimates that those funds could be sufficient to keep the government afloat until June 30. At that time, Ms. Yellen would have some additional extraordinary measures at her disposal that would allow her to unlock an additional $145 billion and potentially delay a default until well into July.

It's too close to call.

The lack of clarity about the X-date has made it difficult for lawmakers to know how much pressure they are under to strike a deal. The government may not know how quickly cash is running out until right before the country faces default.

But pressure is still mounting. Congress is likely to take days — if not weeks — to pass legislation to raise the debt ceiling. And even if President Biden and Speaker Kevin McCarthy strike an agreement, there is no guarantee that the House and Senate will easily pass the legislation.

The legislative calendar gets increasingly complicated as summer approaches.

Mr. McCarthy and Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the majority leader, would need to navigate legislation reflecting that agreement through their chambers, and the days left to do so are rapidly dwindling. The House is scheduled to be in session for only six days before the end of the month. The Senate is set for just five.

Analysts have been watching the legislative schedule closely as they try to read the debt limit tea leaves. If no deal is signed into law by Memorial Day and Ms. Yellen does not announce that the X-date is delayed, that could raise the likelihood of a short-term suspension of the borrowing cap to give Congress more time to act.

THE NEW YORK TIMES CLASSIFIED LISTINGS

IN PRINT & ONLINE AT NYTIMES.COM

Rhode Island–Rentals 2354

ESCAPE TO RHODE ISLAND, quaint, vintage, summer cottage, by the sea. Reminiscent of life in the, "Good Old Days," 1 Bd/1Ba. QEBA beach pass to beautiful, private beach inc.$2000/week QUONOCHONTAUG, RI 804-651-3735

MARSHAL/ SHERIFF SALES 3650

MARSHAL EXECUTION SALE
PUBLIC AUCTION
RE: Parking Violations Vs Various Judgment Debtors I Will Sell
At Public Auction for
City Marshal Ileana Rivera
Or Any Associate Marshal
By Arthur Vigar Auctioneer
On Tuesday, May 23 ,2023
At 10:00 Am At Fives J's Towing
4825 Baldwin Street, Bronx N.Y., 10470
All R/T/I in & to the Following Vehicles:

10 NISSAN	1N4AA5AP4AC814605
03 NISSAN	1N4AL11D43C106849
09 FORD	2FMDK48C59BA54824
13 NISSAN	1N4AL3AP4DN479868
10 MERCED	WDDGF7HB6AF380140
11 BMW	5UXZV4C50BL406643
14 MITSUB	JA32U2FU6EU007911
06 HONDA	5FNRL38416B463122
07 HONDA	5FNRL38627B450642
07 TOYOTA	JTMBD31V776050989
05 INFINITI	JNRAS08W45X203558
06 HYUNDAI	KM8SC13E56U070362
03 FORD	2FMZA52443BB97531
09 GMC	1GKER23D09J208736
06 JEEP	1J4GR48KX6C138325
13 BMW	WBA3B5C50DF597243
08 FORD	1FTSE34L28DA56512
11 HONDA	5FNRL5H66BB048014
04 BMW	WBANA53594B173689
04 TOYOTA	5TDZA22C34S128999
10 NISSAN	1N4AA5AP0AC845804
07 HONDA	JHLRE48567C015792
09 HYUNDAI	5NMSG13D39H255361
08 DODGE	2D8HN44H78R795000
19 HONDA	3CZRU6H16KG701209
22 HONDA	5FNRL6H90NB014235
14 AUDI	WAU2GAFC2EN069694

Following Vehicles Sold With Liens

15 MERCED	WDDSJ4EB6FN178407
18 FORD	1FMCU0F78JUA26485
17 CHEVR	1G1ZE5ST3HF245079
16 BMW	WBA8E1G54GNU10032
13 HONDA	5J6RM3H73DL014004
08 HONDA	1HGCP26888A004998
18 HONDA	3CZRU6H51JG721286
19 NISSAN	5N1AT2MV0KC809458
14 BMW	WBA3A5G53ENP29884
17 HONDA	1HGCT1B71HA006076
16 HYUNDAI	5NPE24AF4GH421291
19 INFINITI	JN1EV7AR2KM558198
18 NISSAN	1N4AL3AP1JC118783
17 MERCED	4JGDA5HB6HA897165
18 JEEP	1C4RJFAGXJC223214
19 KIA	KNDJP3A52K7651426
12 HONDA	5J6RM3H70CL014217
19 CHEVR	1G1ZD5ST3KF113367

Following Vehicle Sold As Salvage

02 ACURA	19UUA56642A050521

CASH ONLY Inspect ½ Hr. Prior to Sale
City Marshal Ileana Rivera
Phone(718)238-7770

MARSHAL EXECUTION SALE
PUBLIC AUCTION
RE: Parking Violations Vs Various Judgment Debtors I Will Sell
At Public Auction For
City Marshal Alejandro Finardo
By Arthur Vigar Auctioneer
On Tuesday, May 23, 2023 At 10:00 AM
4825 Baldwin Street, Bronx, N.Y., 10470
All R/T/I in & to the Following Vehicles:

11 FORD	NM0LS6BN4BT044438
04 FORD	1FBSS31L54HA46464

Following Vehicles Sold With Liens

19 DODGE	2C3CDXJG5KH723271
18 HYUNDAI	5NPD84LF9JH338289
13 NISSAN	JN8AS5MV9DW618068
17 NISSAN	JN8AT2MV1HW013317
19 JEEP	1C4RJFBG8KC653064
20 HYUNDAI	KMHD74LF6LU001599
18 NISSAN	1N4AL3AP3JC239122
18 BMW	5UXKU2C59J0Z62667
19 TOYOTA	JTMP1RFV0LD019467
18 CHEVR	2G1125S30J9159832
19 NISSAN	3N1CN7AP7KL879749
22 FORD	1FMJK1JT6NEA05691
18 V W	3VWD17AU0JM756335
20 NISSAN	1N4BL4BV2LC201651

Following Vehicle Sold As Salvage

12 NISSAN	JN8AS5MVXCW710000

CASH ONLY Inspect ½ Hr. Prior to Sale
City Marshal Alejandro Finardo
Badge #55 Phone (718) 779-2134

AUCTION SALES
1-800-631-8275

NOTICE OF SECURED PARTY PUBLIC AUCTION OF 100% OF THE LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY INTERESTS IN OFFICE AT SOUTHPORT LLC

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that, in accordance with applicable provisions of the Uniform Commercial Code as enacted in New York, SP Office Funding, L.P. ("Secured Party") will sell all of the limited liability company interests (the "Collateral") held by Office Tech LLC in and to Office at Southport LLC (the "Pledged Entity") to the highest qualified bidder at a public sale. The public sale will take place beginning at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (New York) on June 2, 2023, both in person and remotely outside the New York Supreme Court located at 60 Centre Street New York, New York 10007, with access afforded in person and remotely via Zoom or other web-based video conferencing and/or telephonic conferencing program selected by Secured Party. Remote log in credentials will be provided to registered bidders. Secured Party's understanding is that the principal asset of Office at Southport LLC is the real property located at 1101, 1103 and 1107 Lake Washington Boulevard North, Renton, WA 98056 commonly known as Southport Office Park. The Collateral will be sold to the highest qualified bidder; provided, however, that Secured Party reserves the right to cancel the sale in its entirety, or to adjourn the sale to a future date by announcement made at the time and place scheduled for the public sale. The Collateral will be sold as a single lot, and will not be divided or sold in any lesser amounts. Interested parties who intend to bid on the above Collateral must contact Brock Cannon of Newmark Knight Frank at (212) 372-2066, brock.cannon@nmrk.com to receive the Terms of Public Sale and bidding instructions. Upon execution of a standard non-disclosure agreement, additional documentation and information will be made available. Interested parties who do not contact the Secured Party and qualify prior to the public sale will not be permitted to enter a bid or participate at the public sale either in person or remotely.

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP
Attorneys for Secured Party
Attn: Christopher L. Hartmann, P.C.
601 Lexington Ave
New York, New York 10022
Tel: (212) 446-4730
Fax: (212) 446-6460
E-mail: christopher.hartmann@kirkland.com

The New York Times

On campus.
Out in the world.

Provide faculty and students at your school with digital access to The Times. Learn more at nytimes.com/oncampus



If the U.S. Defaults, Then What? Nothing Good, Experts Say.

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

over largely untested rules and procedures.

"We are sailing into uncharted waters," said Andy Sparks, head of portfolio management research at MSCI, which creates indexes that track a wide range of financial assets, including in the Treasury market.

On the cusp of default, a 'horror scenario' comes into view.

Some corners of the financial markets have already begun to shudder, but those ripples pale in comparison to the tidal wave that builds as a default approaches. The $24 trillion U.S. Treasury market is the primary source of financing for the government as well as the largest debt market in the world.

The Treasury market is the backbone of the financial system, integral to everything from mortgage rates to the dollar, the most widely used currency in the world. At times, Treasury debt is even treated as the equivalent of cash because of the surety of the government's creditworthiness.

Shattering confidence in such a deeply embedded market would have effects that are hard to quantify. Most agree, however, that a default would be "catastrophic," said Calvin Norris, a portfolio manager and interest rate strategist at Aegon Asset Management. "That would be a horror scenario."

A missed payment sets off a trading frenzy as markets unravel.

The government pays its debts via banks that are members of a federal payments system called Fedwire. These payments then flow through the market's plumbing, eventually ending up in the accounts of debt holders, including individual savers, pension funds, insurance companies and central banks.

If the Treasury Department wants to change the date it repays investors, it would need to notify Fedwire the day before a payment is due, so investors would know the government was about to default the night before it happened.

There is more than $1 trillion of Treasury debt maturing between May 31 and the end of June that could be refinanced to avoid default, according to analysts at TD Securities. There are also $13.6 billion in interest payments due, spread out over 11 dates; that means 11 different opportunities for the government to miss a payment over the next month.

Fedwire, the payment system, closes at 4:30 p.m. If a payment due is not made by this time, at the very latest, the markets would begin to unravel.

Stocks, corporate debt and the value of the dollar would probably plummet. Volatility could be extreme, not just in the United States but across the world. In 2011, around when lawmakers struck a last-minute deal to avoid breaching the debt limit, the S&P 500 fell 17 percent in just over two weeks. The reaction after a default could be more severe.

Perhaps counterintuitively, some Treasury bonds would be in high demand. Investors would likely dump any debt with a payment coming due soon and buy other Treasury securities with payments due further in the future, still seeing them as a haven in a period of stress.

Ratings downgrades create 'craziness' for bondholders.

Joydeep Mukherji, the primary credit rating analyst for the United States at S&P Global Ratings, said that a missed payment would result in the government being in "selective default," by which it has chosen to renege on some payments but is expected to keep paying other debts. Fitch Ratings has also said it would slash the government's rating in a similar way. Such ratings are usually assigned to imperiled companies and government borrowers.

Moody's, the other major rating agency, has said that if the Treasury misses one interest payment, its credit rating would be lowered by a notch, to just below its current top rating. A second missed interest payment would result in another downgrade.

A slew of government-linked issuers would also likely suffer downgrades, Moody's noted, from the agencies that underpin the mortgage market to hospitals, government contractors, railroads, power utilities and defense companies reliant on government funds. It would also include foreign governments with guarantees on their own debt from the United States, such as Israel.

"I would fear, besides the first-order craziness, there's second-order craziness too: Like, if you get two of the three of the major rating agencies downgrade something, then you have a bunch of financial institutions that can't hold those securities," Austan Goolsbee, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, said at an event in Florida on Tuesday night.

The financial system's plumbing freezes up.

Importantly, a default on one government bill, note or bond does not trigger a default across all of the government's debt, known as "cross default," according to the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association, an industry group. This means that a majority of the government's debt would remain current.

That should limit the effect on markets that rely on Treasury debt for collateral, such as trillions of dollars worth of derivatives contracts and short-term loans called repurchase agreements.

Still, any collateral affected by a default would need to be replaced. CME Group, a large derivatives clearing house, has said that while it has no plans to do so, it could prohibit short-dated Treasuries from being used as collateral, or apply discounts to the value of some assets used to secure transactions.

There is a risk that the financial system's pipes simply freeze over, as investors rush to reposition their portfolios while big banks that facilitate trading step back from the market, making buying and selling just about any asset more difficult.

In the days after a default, a few investors could be in for a windfall. After a grace period, some $12 billion of credit default swaps, a type of protection against a bond default, may be triggered.

The nation's global financial reputation is permanently diminished.

As panic subsides, confidence in the nation's fundamental role in the global economy may be permanently altered.

Foreign investors and governments hold $7.6 trillion, or 31 percent, of all Treasury debt, making them vital to the favorable financing conditions that the U.S. government has long enjoyed.

But after a default, the perceived risk of holding Treasury debt could rise, making it more costly for the government to borrow for the foreseeable future. The dollar's central role in world trade may also be undermined.

Higher government borrowing costs would also make it more expensive for companies to issue bonds and take out loans, as well as raise interest rates for consumers taking out mortgages or using credit cards.

Economically, according to forecasts by the White House even a brief default would result in half a million lost jobs and a somewhat shallow recession. A protracted default would push those numbers to a devastating eight million lost jobs and a severe recession, with the economy shrinking by more than 6 percent.



ADAM PEREZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Stocks and the dollar would likely plummet if the U.S. failed to pay its bills.

LEGISLATION | COURTS | EXECUTIVES

In Montana, Lawsuit Over TikTok Is Filed

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE
the state, and app store providers like Google and Apple will be fined if TikTok is available for download in Montana.

No plans for a lawsuit were announced on Thursday by TikTok itself or leading civil liberty groups. Brooke Oberwetter, a spokeswoman for TikTok, declined to comment on the likelihood of the company's filing a suit.

But Ms. Oberwetter said on Wednesday, after the law was signed, that the ban infringed on the First Amendment rights of people in Montana and that the company would keep "working to defend the rights of our users." She said on Thursday that a federal ban in 2020 did not hold up to legal scrutiny and that Montana did not have a workable plan for enacting the ban.

Ms. Oberwetter also pointed to statements from civil and digital rights groups raising similar concerns. TikTok did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the lawsuit.

Ramya Krishnan, a lawyer at the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University, said the U.S. Constitution protected Americans' access rights to the social media platforms of their choosing. To justify a ban, Ms. Krishnan said, Montana would have to show that its privacy and security concerns were real and that they could not be addressed in narrower ways.

"I don't think TikTok has yet committed to suing, but I think it's likely that it will," she said. "Because this is such a dramatic and unconstitutional incursion into the First Amendment rights of Americans, we are certainly thinking through the possibility of getting involved in some way."

NetChoice, a trade group that counts TikTok as a member and has sued in the past to block state laws targeting tech companies, also said in a statement that the ban violated the Constitution. Krista Chavez, a spokeswoman for the group, said NetChoice did not "currently have plans to sue" to challenge the law.

The Montana plaintiffs are five residents who "create, publish, view, interact with and share videos on TikTok," their lawsuit said. Their lawyers did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The lawsuit said Montana "can no more ban its residents from viewing or posting to TikTok than it could ban The Wall Street Journal because of who owns it or the ideas it publishes." The users also argued that the law violated provisions of the Constitution that give the federal government exclusive power over foreign affairs and prohibit states from regulating interstate commerce.

TikTok users have been successful in blocking a ban of the app before. In 2020, a judge sided with a group of creators who challenged an attempt to ban the app by President Donald J. Trump. TikTok and ByteDance also separately sued to stop the move.

Montana passed its law after the federal government and more than two dozen states banned TikTok from government devices in recent months. Lawmakers and intelligence officials have said TikTok, because of its ownership, could put sensitive user data into the hands of the Chinese government. They have also argued that the app could be used to spread propaganda.



REBECCA STUMPF FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The federal government and more than two dozen states banned TikTok on government devices in recent months.

TikTok says it has never been asked to provide, nor has it provided, any U.S. user data to the Chinese government.

"Many have hypothesized that China might demand that ByteDance, TikTok's parent company, turn over Americans' data or use TikTok to push disinformation in some way, but neither Montana nor the U.S. government has pointed to any evidence that China is actually doing this," Ms. Krishnan said. "That's a problem because speculative harms can't justify a total ban on a communications platform, particularly one that's used by hundreds of thousands of Montanans daily."

In addition to the legal fight, many experts questioned whether the law could be enforced. Internet users can use virtual private network software to disguise their location. Those in Montana border towns could have access to TikTok and other mobile apps through cellular towers in neighboring states.

In an email, Emilee Cantrell, a spokeswoman for the state's attorney general, Austin Knudsen, said there was existing technology for restricting app use within a specific location. The technique, known as geofencing, is "already in use across the gaming industry," which the state's Justice Department also regulates, Ms. Cantrell said.

"A basic internet search will show you companies that provide geolocation compliance," she said. If companies do not comply with the ban, she continued, the agency "will investigate and hold offending entities accountable in accordance with the law."

Asked about the lawsuit filed by TikTok users, a second spokeswoman for Mr. Knudsen, who is the named defendant in the lawsuit, said later on Thursday that his office was "fully prepared to defend the law."

The legislation puts the onus for enforcing the ban on TikTok, Apple and Google. Under the law, TikTok could be fined $10,000 for each individual violation of the ban and an additional $10,000 every day a violation continues. Apple and Google would face the same fines if they allowed the app to be downloaded in the state.

While the State Legislature was considering the ban, a trade group representing Apple and Google said it would be impossible for the companies to restrict access to an app inside a single state.

"The responsibility should be on an app to determine where it can operate, not an app store," David Edmonson, a vice president for TechNet, the trade group, said in a statement on Thursday.

Google and Apple declined to comment.

Young Users of Video Platform Contend With Global Politics

By Jacey Fortin, Eliza Fawcett and Jim Robbins

HELENA, MONT. — Christian Poole, 20, has deemed himself "the unofficial ambassador for the state of Montana."

On TikTok, his favorite social media platform, he posts lighthearted videos about the peculiarities of his home state. His nearly 420,000 followers reward him with hearts and laughing-face emojis.

But when Gov. Greg Gianforte of Montana signed a bill on Wednesday making his state the first in the nation to ban the site, Mr. Poole, along with hundreds of thousands of users, was left trying to make sense of the unlikely collision between TikTok's mostly young users and international geopolitics.

Recent videos posted by Mr. Poole, of Bozeman, cover topics like cows, which outnumber people in Montana, and spring showers, which often bring frozen pellets called graupel, not rain. He says he posts for fun, not money, and his objective on the app is simple: "I want to make people laugh."

Mr. Poole expected the ban to face numerous legal challenges, he said, so he was "not losing sleep" over it.

He was also skeptical that it would be enforced, and he questioned the justification for it from the governor, a Republican, who called the bill "the most decisive action of any state to protect Montanans' private data and sensitive personal information from being harvested by the Chinese Communist Party" in a statement.

"Nothing happens here. Nothing," Mr. Poole said on Thursday. He added, "There's no key players in global politics or even global interactions between the United States and China that live here in Montana."

The law, if upheld, wouldn't go into effect until the beginning of next year.

"It would be removing all this hard work that I've done over the last four years," Mr. Poole said. "It would be a real kick in the face for me."

Many young TikTok fans were more puzzled than outraged.

"I don't understand how they are going to enforce it," said Abi Edgar, 19, who works at the Big Dipper ice cream shop in downtown Helena. She says she watches TikTok — scrolling through K-pop videos, maybe, or news reports — for hours at a time. "I'm confused why they are banning it," she said.

Ellen McLean, another 19-year old working at the same shop, was equally put off by the decision.

"It keeps you busy when you are bored," she said of TikTok. "It's more lighthearted than other apps, and people don't care what they post."

She added that it was good for tourism in Montana. "It's a really good place to promote Yellowstone and Glacier and Big Sky."

Not all of the site's fans are in their teens and twenties. Jeff Spurlin, 70, runs a crepe and coffee shop in Helena. His younger co-workers introduced him to TikTok, he said, and he now looks at it daily for cooking videos, fitness tips and random fun facts.

He saw the ban, passed in a Legislature dominated by Republicans, as a reflection of the state's recent lurch to the right.

"In Montana's current political climate, it doesn't surprise me," he said. "It's beyond conservative, and extremely far right. It's scary conservative."

Questions and skepticism from puzzled Montanans.

While some federal officials have worried that TikTok, which is owned by the Chinese company ByteDance, could share sensitive user data with the government in Beijing, Mr. Spurlin said he found it odd that Montana would lead national efforts to ban it.

He speculated that concerns about Beijing's espionage may have been exacerbated in February, when a Chinese spy balloon passed over the state, drawing national attention.

"The threat from China is real," Mr. Spurlin said, "but it also brings on some paranoia."

TikTok, once known as a place to share silly videos and trendy dance moves, has become an increasingly important public forum in recent years. It is used as a platform to discuss politics, as a search engine and as a source of news — and, sometimes, as a place to spread misinformation.

In Montana, users are fond of hashtags like #bigskycountry, #lastbestplace and #406, the state's area code. They share videos of city scenes — book shops in Missoula, bars and cafes in Billings — alongside expansive views of sparkling lakes, snowcapped mountains, river valleys and rolling hills.

Some have worried that the app is too addictive, because of an algorithm that curates each user's experiences based on how they interact with the videos they see.

"I do worry about social media use for my children," said Lisa Kelley, 42, a mother of two in Helena. "While there are benefits in terms of creativity and connection, kids are using it way too much, and I think it's important to have reasonable parental monitoring and privacy controls in place."

Critics of the ban say that prohibiting TikTok in a single state would be technologically complicated, and difficult to enforce.

"I think that if the state wants to stop people from using TikTok, they're going to have to show a little bit more teeth than they've done thus far," said Paul Kim, 22, of Missoula. He speculated that state lawmakers might use the ban — and the legal challenges that are sure to follow — as a preview, to see how similar legislative attempts might play out across the country.

Mr. Kim, an organizer and activist who also works for the American Civil Liberties Union but was not speaking on the organization's behalf, said the TikTok algorithm had helped him connect with others who shared his interests.

He uses TikTok to watch videos, he said, not to post them. But he has appeared on the platform anyway: Last month, a widely circulated video showed Mr. Kim being arrested in Helena after he had demonstrated in support of his House representative, Zooey Zephyr. Ms. Zephyr, a Democrat, was barred from the House floor after she had made impassioned arguments against a measure to prohibit hormone treatments and surgical care for transgender minors. (The bill was later signed into law.)

Mr. Kim, who enjoys researching the history of the Chinese experience in Montana, said the TikTok ban was also in line with a recurring theme in state politics: Politicians in both parties have been playing up geopolitical concerns about Beijing.

By day's end, the blend of international relations and Montana TikTok videos still felt like mismatched pieces.

"I was talking about escalators with an employee," Mr. Spurlin said on Thursday. "And he said, 'There's a Costco in California with an escalator.' And I said, 'How do you know that?' He said, 'I saw it on TikTok.'"

Thiel Is the Latest Billionaire Said to Have Met With a Disgraced Financier

By MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN and RYAN MAC

In 2014, the venture capitalist Peter Thiel was gaining prominence as one of Silicon Valley's most successful entrepreneurs and investors. He had made billions of dollars as a co-founder of PayPal and Palantir, where he was chairman; and he sat on the board of Facebook, where he was the company's first outside investor.

That made him an ideal contact for Jeffrey Epstein, the convicted sex offender with a knack for cultivating the rich and powerful.

Mr. Thiel apparently had several meetings with Mr. Epstein that year, according to scheduling records of the disgraced financier that were reviewed by The New York Times.

The records — in the form of emails that Mr. Epstein's assistant sent to remind him of upcoming events — show that in September 2014 Mr. Thiel was scheduled to meet with Mr. Epstein on at least three occasions, either in one-on-one meetings or with others over lunch or dinner. Two other times, Mr. Thiel was listed among more than a dozen other well-known people Mr. Epstein should try to see while at his New York mansion.

It's unclear from the records whether all the meetings with Mr. Thiel took place. Some were listed as tentative or "TBD" — for "to be determined."

Jeremiah Hall, a spokesman for Mr. Thiel, declined to comment.

The Times obtained the records through a public records request to the attorney general for the U.S. Virgin Islands, which had sued Mr. Epstein's estate. (Mr. Epstein died in 2019 while awaiting trial on federal sex-trafficking charges.) The records suggest that Mr. Thiel may have had a closer relationship with Mr. Epstein than was previously known.

Even after his 2008 conviction in Florida on a charge of soliciting prostitution from a teenage girl, Mr. Epstein continued to hobnob with top finance executives and investors, scientists, professors, politicians and celebrities.

Mr. Epstein was fascinated with the technology industry, attending conferences with high-profile industry executives. In 2015, for



CHANDAN KHANNA/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

It's unclear from the records whether all of the scheduled meetings between Peter Thiel, above, and Jeffrey Epstein in 2014 did indeed take place.

example, the LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman invited him to a dinner attended by, among others, the Tesla chief executive, Elon Musk; the Facebook chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg; and Mr. Thiel. (The dinner was previously reported by Axios.)

The records reviewed by The Times, which begin in 2011, are not a comprehensive accounting of Mr. Epstein's meetings. They do not cover every day, and even full years are missing. (Some of the calendar entries were previously reported by The Wall Street Journal in connection with other individuals.)

On Sept. 14, 2014, Mr. Epstein was tentatively scheduled to have lunch with Mr. Thiel, the records show. The schedule then changed, with Mr. Thiel listed as having an appointment in the afternoon, followed by a potential dinner with Mr. Epstein, the director Woody Allen and others. Mr. Thiel was also expected to have lunch with the financier the next day and the following weekend, the records show.

It's unclear why Mr. Thiel was meeting with Mr. Epstein. At the time, Mr. Thiel sat on the board of Facebook and oversaw Founders Fund, a top venture capital firm. Mr. Thiel was also the chairman of Palantir, the C.I.A.-backed data analytics company, which at the time was seeking outside investments.

Two years later, Mr. Thiel was the most prominent Silicon Valley investor to back the successful presidential campaign of Donald J. Trump.

Mr. Thiel's name comes up in the calendar entries far less often than other names of famous people like the Wall Street financier Leon Black, who is listed as having come over frequently for breakfast and lunch.

Bank Agrees On Payout To Victims Of Epstein

By MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN

Deutsche Bank has agreed to pay $75 million to sexual abuse victims of Jeffrey Epstein to settle a lawsuit filed last year in Manhattan, according to the lawyers for the victims.

The settlement, which requires approval by a federal judge, would resolve a proposed class-action suit that alleged the bank had helped enable the disgraced financier's sex trafficking of young women by missing warning signs in Mr. Epstein's accounts that he was engaged in wrongdoing.

Dylan Riddle, a spokesman for the German bank, declined to comment on any proposed settlement. But in a statement, Mr. Riddle said the bank "has made considerable progress in remedying a number of past issues," while investing in bolstering its internal controls.

The proposed $75 million settlement closes another chapter in Deutsche Bank's relationship with the disgraced financier.

David Boies and Brad Edwards, the lawyers for the women who brought the case, said $75 million would be made available to the more than 125 victims of Mr. Epstein who previously obtained payouts from a restitution fund established by his estate after his death in 2019.

Mr. Boies and Mr. Edwards, who work at separate firms, said in a joint statement: "This groundbreaking settlement is the culmination of two law firms conducting more than a decade-long investigation to hold one of Epstein's financial banking partners responsible for the role it played in facilitating his trafficking organization."

News of the settlement was reported earlier by The Wall Street Journal.

Mr. Epstein's estate established the restitution fund several months after he died by suicide while in federal custody awaiting trial on sex-trafficking charges.

The fund has paid out more than $125 million to his victims — many of whom were teenage girls when Mr. Epstein abused them. In addition, the estate has paid about $20 million in settlements to other victims who did not seek awards from the restitution fund.

The tentative settlement closes another chapter in Deutsche Bank's relationship with Mr. Epstein, which began in 2013 and continued until late 2018. In 2020, Deutsche Bank, which is based in Frankfurt, agreed to pay $150 million to New York regulators to settle claims that the bank repeatedly overlooked suspicious transactions involving Mr. Epstein and ignored obvious red flags about his activities.

Deutsche Bank took Mr. Epstein on as a client after JPMorgan Chase, which had been his primary bank for roughly 15 years, stopped doing business with him. The lawyers for the victims have sued JPMorgan, claiming it, too, ignored warning signs about Mr. Epstein and benefited financially from his sex-trafficking operation.

Patricia Wexler, a spokeswoman for JPMorgan, declined to comment on Deutsche Bank's tentative settlement, but said in a statement, "In hindsight, any association with Epstein was a mistake and we regret it, but we do not believe we violated any laws."

The government of the U.S. Virgin Islands, the territory where Mr. Epstein operated his businesses for nearly two decades, has sued JPMorgan. Last year Mr. Epstein's estate agreed to pay $105 million to the Virgin Islands to settle a lawsuit brought by the government to recover tax benefits it had awarded to one of his businesses in St. Thomas.

In 2008, Mr. Epstein pleaded guilty in Florida to a charge of soliciting prostitution from a teenage girl and was ordered to register as a sex offender. But the guilty plea did not stop the rich and famous — including a number of wealthy men — from continuing to socialize with him at his Manhattan townhouse and other residences.

TECHNOLOGY

Extremism Is at Home in Gamer Chat Rooms

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

ing industry and how discussions in its online communities can manifest themselves in the physical world.

A report, released on Thursday by the NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights, underscored how deeply rooted misogyny, racism and other extreme ideologies have become in some video game chat rooms, and offered insight into why people playing video games or socializing online seem to be particularly susceptible to such viewpoints.

The people spreading hate speech or extreme views have a far-reaching effect, the study argued, even though they are far from the majority of users and occupy only pockets of some of these service. These users have built virtual communities to spread their noxious views and to recruit impressionable young people online with hateful and sometimes violent content — with comparatively little of the public pressure that social media giants like Facebook and Twitter have faced.



JEFF CHIU/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Game Developers Conference in San Francisco in March. A report details extreme ideologies in chat rooms.

The center's researchers conducted a survey in five of the world's major gaming markets — the United States, Britain, South Korea, France and Germany — and found that 51 percent of those who played online reported encountering extremist statements in games that featured multiple players during the past year.

"It may well be a small number of actors, but they're very influential and can have huge impacts on the gamer culture and the experiences of people in real world events," the report's author, Mariana Olaizola Rosenblat, said.

Historically male-dominated, the video game world has long grappled with problematic behavior, such as GamerGate, a long-running harassment campaign against women in the industry in 2014 and 2015. In recent years, video game companies have promised to improve their workplace cultures and hiring processes.

Gaming platforms and adjacent social media sites are particularly vulnerable to extremist groups' outreach because of the many impressionable young people who play games, as well as the relative lack of moderation on some sites, the report said.

Some of these bad actors speak directly to other people in multiplayer games, like Call of Duty, Minecraft and Roblox, using in-game chat or voice functions. Other times, they turn to social media platforms, like Discord, that first rose to prominence among gamers and have since gained wider appeal.

Among those surveyed in the report, between 15 and 20 percent who were under the age of 18 said they had seen statements supporting the idea that "the white race is superior to other races," that "a particular race or ethnicity should be expelled or eliminated" or that "women are inferior."

In Roblox, a game that allows players to create virtual worlds, players have re-enacted Nazi concentration camps and the massive re-education camps that the Chinese Communist government has built in Xinjiang, a mostly Muslim region, the report said.

In the game World of Warcraft, online groups — called guilds — have also advertised neo-Nazi affiliations. On Steam, an online games store that also has discussion forums, one user named themselves after the chief architect of the Holocaust; another incorporated antisemitic language in their account name. The report uncovered similar user names connected to players in Call of Duty.

Disboard, a volunteer-run site that shows a list of Discord servers, includes some that openly advertise extremist views. Some are public, while others are private and invitation only.

One server tags itself as Christian, nationalist and "based," slang that has come to mean not caring what other people think. Its profile image is Pepe the Frog, a cartoon character that has been appropriated by white supremacists.

"Our race is being replaced and shunned by the media, our schools and media are turning people into degenerates," the group's invitation for others to join reads.

Jeff Haynes, a gaming expert who until recently worked at Common Sense Media, which monitors entertainment online for families, said, "Some of the tools that are used to connect and foster community, foster creativity, foster interaction can also be used to radicalize, to manipulate, to broadcast the same kind of egregious language and theories and tactics to other people."

Enormous challenges in policing troubling behavior online.

Gaming companies say they have cracked down on hateful content, establishing prohibitions of extremist material and recording or saving audio from in-game conversations to be used in potential investigations. Some, like Discord, Twitch, Roblox and Activision Blizzard — the maker of Call of Duty — have put in place automatic detection systems to scan for and delete prohibited content before it can be posted. In recent years, Activision has banned 500,000 accounts on Call of Duty for violating its code of conduct.

Discord said in a statement that it was "a place where everyone can find belonging, and any behavior that goes counter to that is against our mission." The company said it barred users and shut down servers if they exhibited hatred or violent extremism.

Will Nevius, a Roblox spokesman, said in a statement, "We recognize that extremist groups are turning to a variety of tactics in an attempt to circumvent the rules on all platforms, and we are determined to stay one step ahead of them."

Valve, the company that runs Steam, did not respond to a request for comment.

Experts like Mr. Haynes say the fast, real-time nature of games creates enormous challenges to policing unlawful or inappropriate behavior. Nefarious actors have also been adept at evading technological obstacles as quickly as they can be erected.

In any case, with three billion people playing worldwide, the task of monitoring what is happening at any given moment is virtually impossible.

"In upcoming years, there will be more people gaming than there would be people available to moderate the gaming sessions," Mr. Haynes said. "So in many ways, this is literally trying to put your fingers in a dike that is ridden by holes like a massive amount of Swiss cheese."

Twitter Says Microsoft Improperly Used Data

By Kate Conger, Ryan Mac and Cade Metz

Twitter on Thursday sent a letter to Satya Nadella, Microsoft's chief executive, accusing the tech giant of improperly using the social media company's data.

In the letter, which was reviewed by The New York Times, Twitter said Microsoft had violated an agreement over its data and had declined to pay for that usage. In some cases, the letter said, Microsoft had used more Twitter data than it was supposed to. Microsoft also shared the Twitter data with government agencies without permission, the letter said.

"Microsoft may have been in violation of multiple provisions of the agreement for an extended period of time," Alex Spiro, the personal lawyer for Elon Musk, who owns Twitter, wrote in the letter to Mr. Nadella.

The letter may be a prelude to Twitter trying to charge Microsoft for its data. Mr. Musk, who bought Twitter last year for $44 billion, has said that it is urgent for the company to make money and that it is near bankruptcy. Twitter has since introduced new subscription products and made other moves to gain more revenue. In March, the company said it would charge more for developers to gain access to its stream of tweets.

Last month, Mr. Musk publicly called out Microsoft for "illegally" using Twitter's data to train its artificial intelligence technologies. "Lawsuit time," he tweeted at the time.

Microsoft said it did not currently pay Twitter for its data. Frank Shaw, a Microsoft spokesman, said the company had received Twitter's letter and would review the questions and respond. "We look forward to continuing our long-term partnership with the company," he said.

Mr. Musk did not respond to a request for comment.

Mr. Musk and Microsoft have had a bumpy relationship recently. Among other things, Mr. Musk has feuded with Microsoft over OpenAI, the start-up behind the ChatGPT chatbot. Mr. Musk, who helped found OpenAI in 2015, has said Microsoft, which has invested $13 billion in OpenAI, controls the start-up's business decisions. Microsoft has disputed that characterization.

Last month, Microsoft also said it would not pay for access to Twitter's data and told customers of its advertising platform that it would remove Twitter from the platform. Advertisers use Microsoft's ad platform to manage their social media accounts, including Twitter.

In recent months, Twitter and other organizations have also started to complain that the latest wave of A.I. technologies were built using their digital data. Reddit said last month that it would begin charging for access to its application programming interface, or API, so that its data could not be used for free.

Microsoft's Bing chatbot and OpenAI's ChatGPT are built from what are called large languages models, or L.L.M.s, which build their skills by analyzing vast amounts of data culled from across the internet.

A letter to Microsoft's chief claims a number of violations.

In December, Mr. Musk cut off OpenAI from Twitter's data. OpenAI had paid $2 million a year for access to the data, but Mr. Musk believed the amount was not enough to fairly compensate Twitter.

The letter to Mr. Nadella does not specify if Twitter will take legal action against Microsoft or ask for financial compensation. It demands that Microsoft abide by Twitter's developer agreement and examine the data use of eight of its apps.

Twitter also said Microsoft must submit a report by June on how much Twitter data the company possesses, how that data was stored and used, and when government-related organizations gained access to that data. Twitter's rules prohibit the use of its data by government agencies, unless the company is informed about it first.

The letter adds that Twitter's data was used in Xbox, Microsoft's gaming system; Bing, its search engine; and several other tools for advertising and cloud computing.

Twitter imposes limits on how much of its data can be used, saying that access cannot exceed a "reasonable" volume. But Microsoft used Twitter's data portal "over 780 million times and retrieved over 26 billion tweets in 2022 alone," the letter said.

Meta Opts to Share Its A.I. Technology

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

content, those companies are becoming increasingly secretive about the methods and software that underpin their products.

Google, OpenAI and others have been critical of Meta, saying an unfettered open-source approach is dangerous. A.I.'s rapid rise in recent months has raised alarm bells about the technology's risks, including how it could upend the job market if it is not properly deployed. And within days of LLaMA's release, the system leaked onto 4chan, the online message board known for spreading false and misleading information.

"We want to think more carefully about giving away details or open sourcing code" of A.I. technology, said Zoubin Ghahramani, a Google vice president of research who helps oversee A.I. "Where can that lead to misuse?"

Some within Google have also wondered if open-sourcing A.I. technology may pose a competitive threat. In a memo this month, which was leaked on the online publication Semianalysis.com, a Google engineer warned colleagues that the rise of open-source software like LLaMA could cause Google and OpenAI to lose their lead in A.I.

But Meta said it saw no reason to keep its code to itself. The growing secrecy at Google and OpenAI is a "huge mistake," Dr. LeCun said, and a "really bad take on what is happening." He argues that consumers and governments will refuse to embrace A.I. unless it is outside the control of companies like Google and Meta.

"Do you want every A.I. system to be under the control of a couple of powerful American companies?" he asked.

OpenAI declined to comment.

Meta's open-source approach to A.I. is not novel. The history of technology is littered with battles between open source and proprietary, or closed, systems. Some hoard the most important tools that are used to build tomorrow's computing platforms, while others give those tools away. Most recently, Google open-sourced the Android mobile operating system to take on Apple's dominance in smartphones.

Many companies have openly shared their A.I. technologies in the past, at the insistence of researchers. But their tactics are changing because of the race around A.I. That shift began last year when OpenAI released ChatGPT. The chatbot's wild success wowed consumers and kicked up the competition in the A.I. field, with Google moving quickly to incorporate more A.I. into its products and Microsoft investing $13 billion in OpenAI.

While Google, Microsoft and OpenAI have since received most of the attention in A.I., Meta has also invested in the technology for nearly a decade. The company has spent billions of dollars building the software and the hardware needed to realize chatbots and other "generative A.I.," which produce text, images and other media on their own.

In recent months, Meta has worked furiously behind the scenes to weave its years of A.I. research and development into new products. Mr. Zuckerberg is focused on making the company an A.I. leader, holding weekly meetings on the topic with his executive team and product leaders.

On Thursday, in a sign of its commitment to A.I., Meta said it had designed a new computer chip and improved a new supercomputer specifically for building A.I. technologies. It is also designing a computer data center with an eye toward the creation of A.I.

"We've been building advanced infrastructure for A.I. for years now, and this work reflects long-term efforts that will enable even more advances and better use of this technology across everything we do," Mr. Zuckerberg said.

Meta's biggest A.I. move in recent months was releasing LLaMA, which is what is known as a large language model, or L.L.M. (LLaMA stands for "Large Language Model Meta AI.") L.L.M.s are systems that learn skills by analyzing vast amounts of text, including books, Wikipedia articles and chat logs. ChatGPT and Google's Bard chatbot are also built atop such systems.

L.L.M.s pinpoint patterns in the text they analyze and learn to generate text of their own, including term papers, blog posts, poetry and computer code. They can even carry on complex conversations.

In February, Meta openly released LLaMA, allowing academics, government researchers and



VICTOR LLORENTE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Yann LeCun, Meta's chief A.I. scientist, says that people can't be stopped from creating toxic content, but that social networks can tightly restrict it.

others who provided their email address to download the code and use it to build their own chatbot.

But the company went further than many other open-source A.I. projects. It allowed people to download a version of LLaMA after it had been trained on enormous amounts of digital text culled from the internet. Researchers call this "releasing the weights," referring to the particular mathematical values learned by the system as it analyzes data.

This was significant because analyzing all that data typically requires hundreds of specialized computer chips and tens of millions of dollars, resources most companies do not have. Those who have the weights can deploy the software quickly, easily and cheaply, spending a fraction of what it would otherwise cost to create such powerful software.

As a result, many in the tech industry believed Meta had set a dangerous precedent. And within days, someone released the LLaMA weights onto 4chan.

At Stanford University, researchers used Meta's new technology to build their own A.I. system, which was made available on the internet. A Stanford researcher, Moussa Doumbouya, soon used it to generate problematic text, according to screenshots seen by The New York Times. In one instance, the system provided instructions for disposing of a dead body without being caught. It also generated racist material, including comments that supported the views of Adolf Hitler.

In a private chat among the researchers, which was seen by The Times, Mr. Doumbouya said distributing the technology to the public would be like "a grenade available to everyone in a grocery store." He did not respond to a request for comment.

Stanford promptly removed the A.I. system from the internet. The project was designed to provide researchers with technology that "captured the behaviors of cutting-edge A.I. models," said Tatsunori Hashimoto, the Stanford professor who led the project. "We took the demo down as we became increasingly concerned about misuse potential beyond a research setting."

Dr. LeCun argues that this kind of technology is not as dangerous as it might seem. He said small numbers of individuals could already generate and spread disinformation and hate speech. He added that toxic material could be tightly restricted by social networks like Facebook.

"You can't prevent people from creating nonsense or dangerous information or whatever," he said. "But you can stop it from being disseminated."

For Meta, more people using open-source software can also level the playing field as it competes with OpenAI, Microsoft and Google.

Dr. LeCun also pointed to recent history to explain why Meta was committed to open-sourcing A.I. technology. He said the evolution of the consumer internet was the result of open, communal standards that helped build the fastest, most widespread knowledge-sharing network the world had ever seen.

"Progress is faster when it is open," he said. "You have a more vibrant ecosystem where everyone can contribute."

OpenAI Releases an iPhone Version of Its ChatGPT App That Responds to Voice Commands

By CADE METZ

Since ChatGPT debuted in November, hundreds of millions of people have experimented with the online chatbot, which can answer questions, write poetry, draft emails and riff on almost any topic from inside a web browser.

On Thursday, OpenAI, the San Francisco artificial intelligence lab behind ChatGPT, unveiled a new version of the chatbot for the iPhone, hoping to build on its enormous popularity.

Unlike the browser-based version of ChatGPT, the smartphone app responds to voice commands, operating a bit like Apple's Siri digital assistant or Amazon's Alexa. The app does not answer with voice, but generates responses in text.

In a blog post, OpenAI said the app was part of its effort to transform its A.I. research into "useful tools that empower people, while continuously making them more accessible." It declined to comment further.

In offering its flagship technology to billions of iPhone users, OpenAI is solidifying its position among the giants of the tech industry. ChatGPT is the most prominent example of what is called generative A.I., technology that can generate text, images and other media based on short prompts. Google, Microsoft and various start-ups have released similar bots and have begun to roll such technology into a wide range of online services.

The result of more than a decade of research at companies like Google and OpenAI, these chatbots are poised to remake everything from internet search engines like Google Search and Bing to email programs like Gmail and Outlook.

They can generate digital text that can be used in almost any context, including for students to write term papers and business-people to create email messages and other marketing materials.

The technology is not perfect. Because these chatbots learn by analyzing vast amounts of digital text culled from across the internet, they cannot distinguish between fact and fiction. And the computer code they generate is often flawed.

Today, the technology tends to complement human workers rather than replace their skills outright.

OpenAI is not the first to introduce technology that lets people use ChatGPT with voice; some small companies and independent developers have already done so. Microsoft also offers a version of its Bing chatbot that responds to voice commands.

The new iPhone app is free. Subscribers of ChatGPT Plus — available for $20 a month — can use a more powerful version of the chatbot based on a technology called GPT-4.

Sports
The New York Times

PRO BASKETBALL | W.N.B.A. SEASON PREVIEW

At the End of Griner's Ordeal, A Changing W.N.B.A. Awaits



A PUSH TO REMEDY INEQUITIES IN PAY, WORK CONDITIONS AND OPPORTUNITY

By JONATHAN ABRAMS | Illustration by JAN ROBERT DÜNNWELLER

PHOENIX — Brittney Griner embarked on a four-day itinerary that would disrupt anyone's circadian rhythm.

First came the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner in Washington, where she was decked out in a sharp, black suit that Saturday night. President Biden pointed to her in the audience and said, "Boy, I can hardly wait to see you back on the court."

Soon she was rushing to catch a flight, landing in Phoenix at 4 a.m. for the start of W.N.B.A. training camp with the Mercury. Then she hustled back east, to New York, for her first Met Gala. She wore a sleek tan suit, and her wife, Cherelle Griner, was in a strapless white gown, both custom outfits by Calvin Klein. They mingled with A-list celebrities that night, but Brittney needed to be back in Phoenix by Tuesday afternoon for more basketball and, she had hoped, a nap.

The sparkling events, time-zone hopping and overall spectacle were overwhelming but perhaps also came as a kind of relief for Griner, who spent nearly 10 months detained in Russia and returned to the United States in December as a new symbol of hope. Ensnared in a geopolitical showdown between Washington and Moscow, Griner drew attention not only to herself and to the plight of other foreign detainees but also to the financial disparities facing women in sports that had brought her to Russia in the first place.

On Friday, Griner will return to the court for her first official W.N.B.A. game in 579 days. The league is not the same now, in part because of her. The issues her detention spotlighted are not new and are unlikely to be easily resolved. But she has galvanized a potent fan base and sports work force who are both eager to welcome her home and to use this moment to promote change alongside her.

"We have wanted change for a long time, but now we're really starting to demand it," Minnesota Lynx forward Napheesa Collier said. "We're just getting a little more impatient with that and realizing that it's an issue where we don't have the money yet, but pushing so that really, really soon we do have the resources to be treated like the athletes we are."

Continued on Page B10

GOLF | P.G.A. CHAMPIONSHIP

Ferocious Oak Hill Bares Its Teeth, and the Players Grin and Bear It

By ALAN BLINDER

PITTSFORD, N.Y. — Scottie Scheffler had, at least in the moment, a share of the P.G.A. Championship lead when he offered a foreboding prediction Thursday afternoon: Oak Hill Country Club, already playing to the point of menace in the first round, would only become more terrorizing.

The winds are expected to bluster. Rain is coming. And, for good measure, the East Course has been recently restored to bring back the diabolical, century-old wizardry of the architect Donald J. Ross.

“It's just one of those places where you hit one shot maybe barely offline, and sometimes can you hit a good shot and end up in a place where it's pretty penalizing,” said Scheffler, the 2022 Masters Tournament winner, who nevertheless had his first bogey-free round in a major championship Thursday. “There's lots of tough holes out there.”

The rough is showing itself to be ferociously retributive, the fairways so firm that balls are only so often staying in them — even after the frost that delayed Thursday's start by nearly two hours had softened the turf. Rory McIlroy, the four-time major champion, hit two fairways all day as he dueled with crosswinds off the tees.

But there was no parade of aggrieved players publicly fuming over the setup just outside Rochester, N.Y. Instead, as the tight leaderboard took shape before play was suspended because of darkness, a brand of begrudging, knowing admiration took hold, even as the likelihood of a runaway winner seemed distant.

“Very difficult golf course,” said Bryson DeChambeau, whose four-under-par 66 put him in second place, one shot behind the solo leader Eric Cole, who did not complete his round on Thursday night. “As I was looking at it throughout the week, I'm like, man, I don't know how shooting under par is even possible out here on some of the golf holes.”

“It's playing tough,” said Kurt Kitayama, who was at even par. “I don't think anyone's really comfortable.”

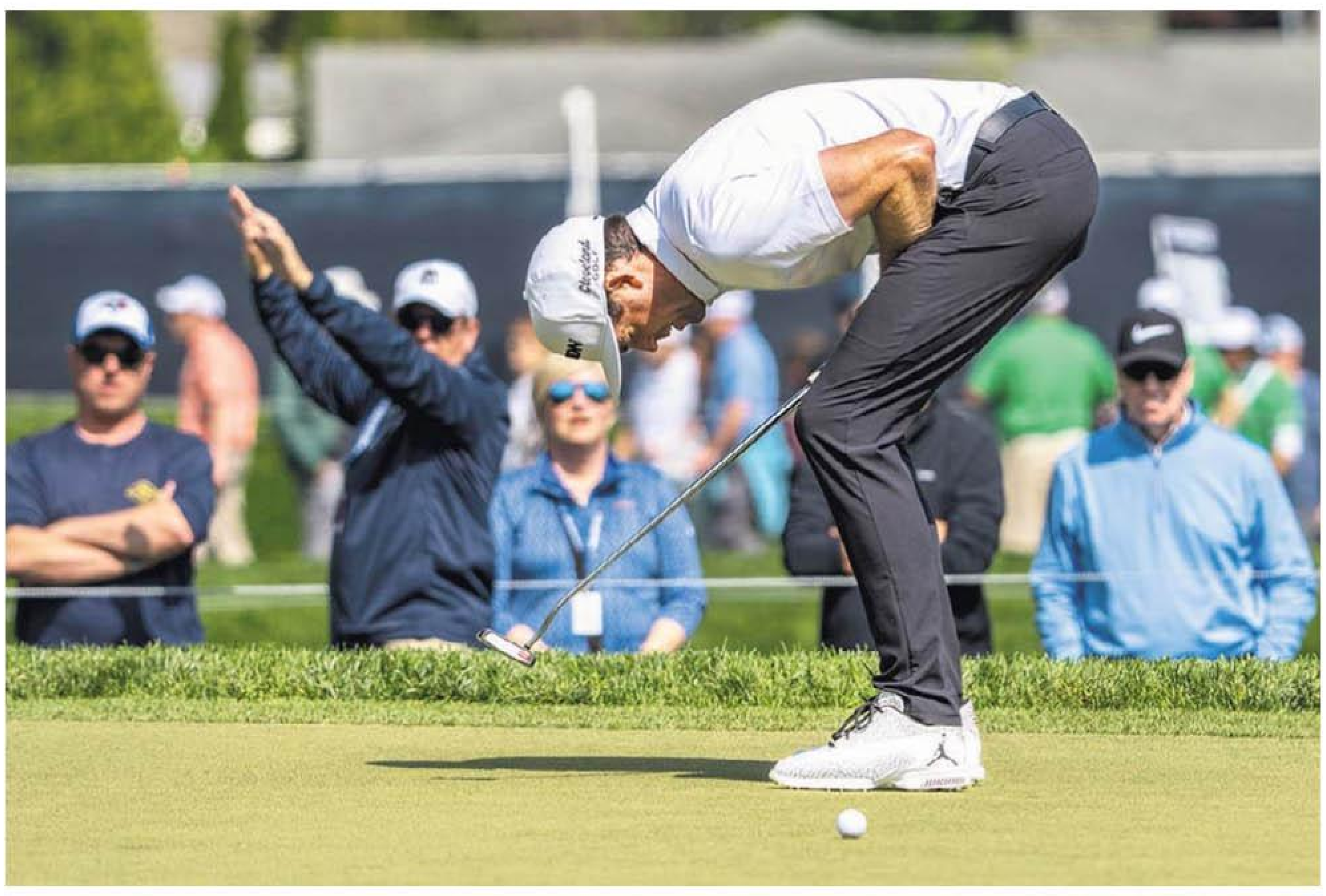
“It stacks up with some of the toughest major championship venues that I have ever played,” said Corey Conners, who has had three top-10 finishes at the Masters, after his three-under-par round.

The sterling performance by DeChambeau, who has routinely sputtered since his 2020 U.S. Open victory in New York at Winged Foot, often seen as similar to the recharged Oak Hill, came after an early bogey on the 12th hole. (With a 156-man field, tournament organizers opted for a two-tee start. Because of the frost delay, the last group's tee time was pushed back to 4:32 p.m., less than four hours before sunset.)



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Despite the occasional immovable obstruction, Scottie Scheffler managed a bogey-free first round Thursday at Oak Hill Country Club in the P.G.A. Championship.



Keegan Bradley found a little putting frustration on No. 7, but still shot a 2-under-par 68.

He moved to under par for the first time on his seventh hole — No. 16 — and finished his front nine at one under. Three birdies on his back nine, including one at No. 6, the hole that the course restorer Andrew Green has judged as Oak Hill's most threatening, brought him to four under. Afterward, having become “so used to hitting it everywhere,” he reveled in a day of straight drives that, he conceded, could be little more than a memory by Friday evening.

Scheffler, only a week removed from a round near Dallas in which he made birdie or eagle on five of his first six holes, found something approximating a groove on the par-5 No. 4. His tee shot rocketed wayward and landed miserably near a tree. He ultimately saved par anyway.

“We got a wind switch and had a really good up-and-down to keep the round going,” said Scheffler, who ended the day tied for third with Conners and Dustin Johnson, another Masters winner. “You would hate to bogey a par-5, especially when there's only two of them around this place. That was good momentum.”

Cole, 34, charged up the leaderboard late in the day, when three consecutive birdies brought his score to five under. He had played in one other major in his career, the 2021 U.S. Open, where he missed the cut.

“When I did have an opportunity, I kind of felt like I happened to read it right and hit a good putt, and they went in today, so that was good,” Cole said Thursday night.

The first round, with 11 groups scheduled to resume play Friday morning, was more boggling for others.

There was Kazuki Higa, who missed the cut at the two other majors of his career, opening his day with birdies on four of his first five holes, only to end it with four consecutive bogeys or double bogeys. Jon Rahm, the No. 1 player in the Official World Golf Ranking and the winner of last month's Masters Tournament, later finished at six over, the worst single-round showing at a P.G.A. Championship by a world No. 1 since 1987. And Brooks Koepka, who dueled with Rahm in the final round at the Masters but found himself with a two-over-par 72 on Thursday, said the first round “was the worst I've hit it in a long time.”

The rigors of an event like this week's helped shape Green's thinking when he began work on the course, which hosted P.G.A. Championships in 2003 and 2013, as well as a Ryder Cup and three U.S. Opens.

“Knowing that the golf course has a wonderful major championship legacy, and knowing that was something the club wanted to continue to do, we had to blend the Donald Ross design elements with modern championship golf,” Green said in an interview this year.

The greens took on unorthodox shapes again, bunkers assumed greater brutality and more so-called chocolate drops — the turf-shrouded mounds that were a Ross signature — appeared.

“You play really well and hit fairways and greens, you can make some putts, you can shoot a few under par,” said Viktor Hovland, who finished at two under on Thursday. “But if you're a little bit off, the rough is just so penal. If you are short or you make a couple bogeys, you want to attack the pin, and you hit it more in a bad spot and it's just a never-ending cycle.”

The cut is scheduled for Friday evening, daylight permitting, with the top 70 and ties advancing to the weekend. Then the rain will start.

Leaderboard

NOTABLES (COMPLETED ROUNDS)

2	Bryson DeChambeau	-4
T3	Scottie Scheffler	-3
T3	Dustin Johnson	-3
T6	Keegan Bradley	-2
T27	Collin Morikawa	+1
T27	Rory McIlroy	+1
T42	Patrick Reed	+2
T42	Brooks Koepka	+2
T42	Justin Thomas	+2
T42	Hideki Matsuyama	+2
T63	Gary Woodland	+3
T63	Jordan Spieth	+3
T117	Jon Rahm	+6
T151	Steven Alker	+10

Quite a Bit Lighter, DeChambeau Regains His Form

BILL PENNINGTON ON GOLF

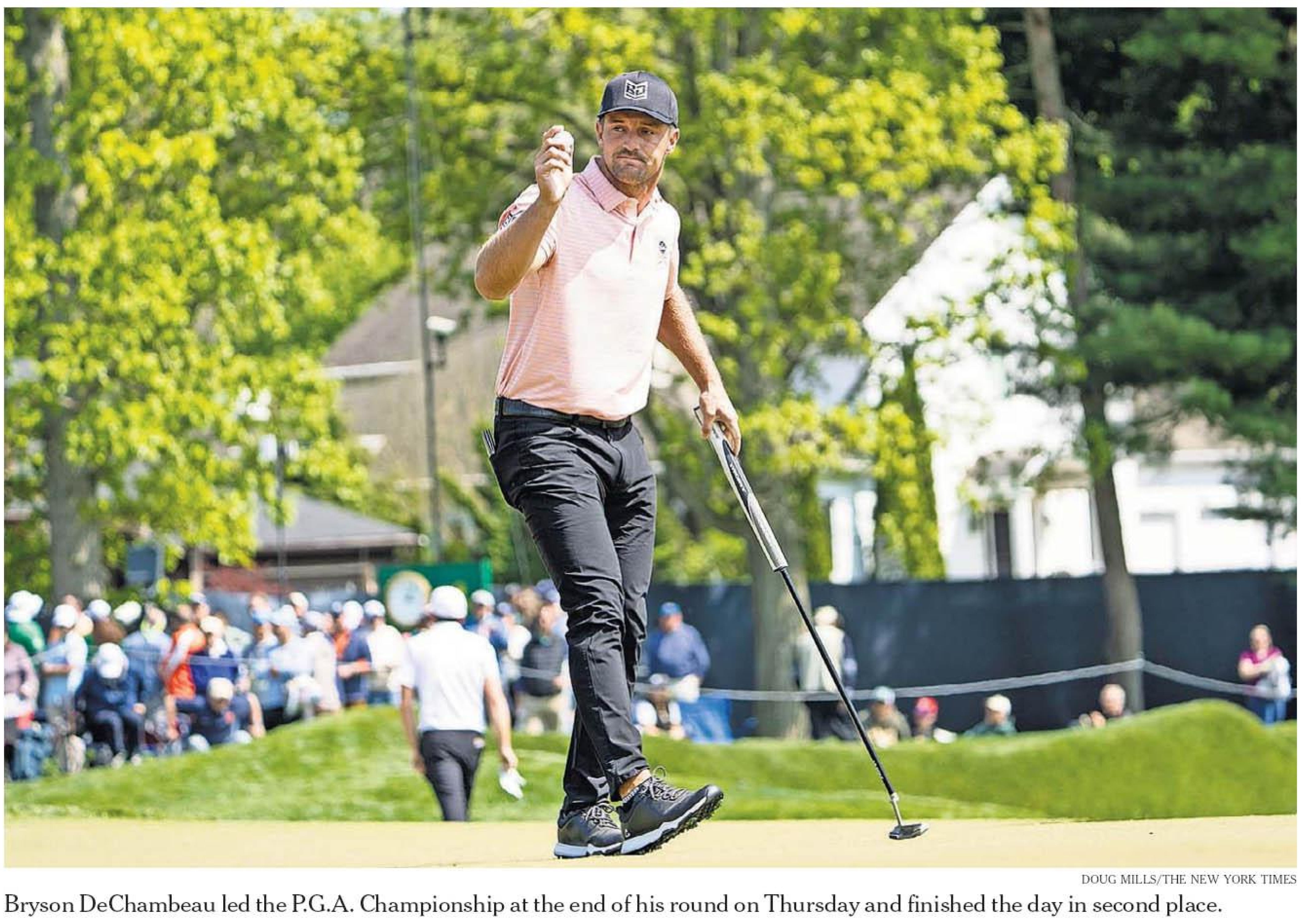
PITTSFORD, N.Y. — Bryson DeChambeau walked onto his final green in the first round of the 2023 P.G.A. Championship on Thursday and the modest gallery awaiting him remained hushed. DeChambeau was leading the event and on his way to a sterling 18-hole score, his best at an American major championship in three years. And yet, the roughly 200 silent fans near the green stared at him as they would an exhibit in a museum.

This is the place DeChambeau has come to inhabit in golf. Even at the conclusion of a sparkling performance, fans were curious but nonetheless wary about awarding him too much affection.

Three years ago, he was feted and cheered as the game's next revolutionary, one who would inspire a new generation to swing as hard as possible on every shot. It was the way to his record-setting 2020 U.S. Open victory. He promoted an intense workout regimen and a radical diet. His following was young and raucous.

Then came a long series of uninspiring results, a defection from the PGA Tour to LIV Golf and more ineffective play that made him a relative afterthought. Once ranked fourth in the world, DeChambeau began Thursday ranked 214th.

But the DeChambeau who attacked the demanding East Course at Oak Hill Country Club in the first round was wholly different, for a day at least. He was still powerful off the tee, often out-driving his playing companions Jason Day and Keegan Bradley by 40 yards. Stepping onto his last green, he was leading the tournament on a day when most players were floundering and cursing under their breath.



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Bryson DeChambeau led the P.G.A. Championship at the end of his round on Thursday and finished the day in second place.

Facing a 50-foot uphill birdie putt, DeChambeau knocked his ball to within a fw inches of the hole. The fans finally relented and applauded politely.

One spectator who appeared to be in his 50s — not the usual demographic for a Bryson die-hard — shouted, “Come on, Bryson! Come on buddy!”

With a four-under-par 66, DeChambeau was second by the time play was suspended because of darkness with many players, including the leader Eric Cole, not having finished their rounds. He left the grounds smiling and with a hop in his step that seemed more than a reflection of the roughly 35 pounds he has shed from his once bulky frame.

He stopped to sign a child's golf ball, fist bumped a handful of fans and jogged off to the scoring tent and then lengthy meetings with reporters and television interviewers.

All the while, he grinned, even as he said repeatedly: “It's been a tough last four or five years.”

It is a quizzical statement for a golfer who since 2018 has had a runaway victory at the U.S. Open, six wins on the PGA Tour and 31 top-10 finishes. In that stretch, he earned more than $23 million on the PGA Tour.

But DeChambeau would explain his view of what has transpired since 2018.

For starters, he had been consuming about 5,000 calories per day and “eating lots of stuff that inflames your body.” He is now eating about 2,900 calories per day.

He also had a hand injury, which he said has healed.

“Obviously having the hand injury was no fun and then learning to play golf again with a new hand,” DeChambeau said.

There were dark days as his slump and ailments continued.

“The emotions have definitely fluctuated pretty high and pretty low — thinking I have something and it fails and going back and forth,” he said. “It's humbling.”

He continued: “I will say that there have been times where it's like, man, I don't know whether this is worth all of it.”

DeChambeau was notorious for hitting balls on practice ranges at PGA Tour events well past sunset, swatting away under lights that illuminated only him. He now seems ambivalent about putting in those long hours.

“You see me out there on the range,” he said. “That's something I don't want to do. I don't want to be out there all night.”

But DeChambeau feels like he's now discovered something, or in his words Thursday: “Trending in the right direction.”

Asked if he was closer to the end of his journey to find, or regain, his swing, he answered: “The end of it, for sure. I want to be just stable now. I'm tired of changing, of trying different things.”

But what of the predictions of him being able to blast 400-yard drives? He shook his head.

“Yeah, I could I hit it a little further,” he said. “Could I try and get a little stronger? Sure. But I'm not going to go full force. It was a fun experiment, but I definitely want to play some good golf now.”

One good round at Oak Hill does not reverse many months of ineffectual play, but what next for DeChambeau?

“Golf is a weird animal,” he replied. “But I feel like I'm trending in the right direction. Of course, playing like I did today makes it easier to feel that way.”

DeChambeau was still smiling. He smiled easily and often two and three years ago, too.

“Maybe it could all change tomorrow; it's golf,” he said. “But I don't think it will.”

TENNIS | FRENCH OPEN

A Roland Garros Without Nadal? Perish the Thought.

CHRISTOPHER CLAREY
ON TENNIS

In case, in this distracted era, you only have time to read the first paragraph on your phone, here is the essential from Rafael Nadal: No French Open this year for the first time since 2004; no retirement just yet.

But there is, of course, much more to Nadal's story, particularly at Roland Garros, the Grand Slam tournament he has dominated like no player has dominated any tennis major.

His 14 singles titles still look like a typo even for those like me who have watched him build that probably unbreakable record, red brick by red brick.

"When you play Roland Garros 14 times you tell yourself you had a good career," the French veteran Nicolas Mahut said in an interview with L'Équipe. "When you win 14 matches there, that's not too bad at all. When you get to the second week 14 times you are one of the great players. And when you win the title 14 times, there is no way to comprehend that. There are no words."

Though Nadal is Spanish, even the French Open organizers buckled under the weight of all the hardware and erected a shimmering, larger-than-life statue of Nadal just inside the main entrance of the tournament grounds.

His reign in Paris — full of flexed biceps, forehand winners and underrated court craft — is one of the great achievements in any sport, and though a 15th title is a long shot at this late stage, all we know for certain is that Nadal will not be winning it this year.

He announced his withdrawal from this year's French Open at a news conference on Thursday in his home city of Manacor at his eponymous academy: another monument to his tennis excellence.

Dressed in jeans and a white, short-sleeved shirt, Nadal, who will turn 37 on June 3, explained calmly and at length that he had lost his latest race against time: failing to recover sufficiently from a core muscle injury he suffered in January at the Australian Open to play.

"It's not a decision that I made, it's a decision that my body made," he said.

Nadal, still interested in playing only when he has a chance to win, will stop practicing through the pain for an extended period, likely several months. He did not rule out returning to competition later in 2023 — mentioning the Davis Cup Finals that will be held in Malaga, Spain, in November — but above all he is aiming to return for what he said was "probably" going to be his final season in 2024.

"I don't want to put myself in a position to say one thing and then do another thing, but my goal and my ambition is to try to stop to give myself an opportunity to enjoy next year," he said, sighing audibly midsentence as if he was fighting himself to talk about the finish line.

John McEnroe, a more combustible tennis champion, used news conferences as therapy, working through his issues and setbacks via the question-and-answer game. Nadal, left eyebrow arching, did some of the same on Thursday and did it, unlike McEnroe, in Spanish, English and Mallorcan, the dialect of Nadal's home island and the lingua franca of the Nadal family.

Whatever the language, the message was the same: Nadal has had enough of gritting his teeth through practice sessions but he craves a happier ending.

There are no guarantees considering that his body has been failing him at an accelerating rate. Oft-injured even in his youth, he is breaking down in new places in his tennis dotage: a fractured rib and abdominal injury in 2022 and the hip injury in 2023, sustained midmatch in his straight-set defeats to Mackenzie McDonald in the second round in Australia.

Perhaps Nadal should not have played through that pain, but he is as gritty as the red clay that suits his game best. And even if newly married and a new father with a fancy yacht and an impressive golf handicap, he is not yet ready to join Roger Federer, his friend and former archrival, in gilded retirement.



MANAN VATSYAYANA/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Rafael Nadal, who injured his hip at the Australian Open, said forgoing this year's French Open was "a decision that my body made."

"I think I don't deserve to finish like this, in a press conference," Nadal said. "I want a different ending and I am going to do my best to make that happen."

He added: "I don't know if I can be competitive to win a Grand Slam. I'm not an irrational person. I am aware of the difficulty of the situation. But I'm not a negative person either. I want to give myself the opportunity to come back and compete."

Farewell tours have their own perils. Stefan Edberg, the former world No. 1 and six-time Grand Slam singles champion from Sweden, announced well in advance that 1996 would be his final season and ended up regretting it, worn out by the post-match ceremonies and gladhanding. When Edberg coached Federer, he advised him to keep it shorter to make it sweeter, and Federer listened: bowing out at age 41 last September on short notice by playing doubles with Nadal at the Laver Cup team event in London.

It was a poignant scene that packed quite a punch with both champions — and plenty of observers — in tears as Federer called it a career. Most other tennis greats — from Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras to Steffi Graf and Serena Williams — have kept their goodbyes compact. In Sampras's case, he avoided the farewell tour altogether, and won his final tournament, the 2002 U.S. Open.

But Nadal is certainly accustomed to bearing the weight of others' expectations and to politely handling the limelight. He has been a star at home since helping Spain beat the United States to win the Davis Cup at age 18 in 2004 and has been a global star since winning the French Open at age 19 in 2005, his debut in the field.

Determined to have a happier ending, probably next year.

He would likely have won Roland Garros even earlier if he had not been forced to miss the event in 2003 and 2004 because of injuries. But despite all the physical challenges, he managed to play his signature tournament 18 years in a row, retiring midtournament just once in 2016 because of a wrist injury.

He has become as much a part of the Roland Garros landscape as the red clay beneath everyone's feet, but it will be someone else's domain this spring.

Novak Djokovic, who turns 36 on Monday, is the only player to beat Nadal twice at the French Open and remains tied with Nadal for the men's record with 22 Grand Slam singles titles. But though Djokovic is built to last with his elastic limbs and centenarian's diet, he has been struggling with elbow pain and has looked far from irresistible on clay this season.

The younger set looks like the slightly better bet. Carlos Alcaraz, 20, is back at No. 1 and already a Grand Slam champion after winning last year's U.S. Open. Holger Rune, 20 as well, beat Djokovic in Rome this week and has elastic limbs of his own. You can add Stefanos Tsitsipas, Casper Ruud, Jannik Sinner or even Daniil Medvedev, formerly allergic to clay, to the short list.

Nadal, absent from the draw for the first time nearly two decades, said he won't watch it all from afar, but he will be keeping tabs.

Last year, he drew some criticism from pro-Djokovic quarters for emphasizing that no tournament is bigger than any player when Djokovic missed the 2022 Australian Open after arriving in Melbourne unvaccinated for the coronavirus and was deported.

"The Australian Open will be great Australian Open with or without him," Nadal said before winning it himself.

But he was clearly eager to be consistent on Thursday.

"My speech is not going to change," he said. "Roland Garros will be always Roland Garros with or without me without a doubt."

He continued: "Players stay for a while, and they leave. Tournaments stay forever."

That is true and will seem truer still when some other man with red-stained socks is crowned champion next month in Paris. But there can also be no doubt that Nadal and Roland Garros will be linked as long as there is a Roland Garros.

PRO BASKETBALL | N.B.A. PLAYOFFS



CHARLES KRUPA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

MAX STRUS As a Division II standout, he thought his pro career was headed for Europe until he transferred to D-I DePaul.



PAUL RUTHERFORD/USA TODAY SPORTS, VIA REUTERS

CALEB MARTIN In his fourth season out of Nevada, he just put up career highs in virtually every major offensive category.



BOB DECHIARA/USA TODAY SPORTS, VIA REUTERS

GABE VINCENT A knee injury and a slow senior season set him back, but he persevered and is now Miami's starting point guard.

Heat See Value in Players Snubbed in the Draft and 'Willing to Do Anything'

By SCOTT CACCIOLA

BOSTON — Max Strus had spent two seasons punishing defenders as a shooting guard at Lewis University, a Division II school in Romeoville, Ill., before he delivered some news to his coach that was not entirely unexpected: He wanted to transfer to a major Division I program.

For the coach, Scott Trost, it was bittersweet. He was sad to see Strus go, but he also knew that Strus was ready for his next challenge.

"And who's to say if he would be where he is today if he didn't make that move?" Trost said.

On Wednesday night, seven years after he transferred to DePaul and nearly four years after he matriculated to the N.B.A. G League as an undrafted free agent, Strus was sinking 3-pointers and making defensive stops for the Miami Heat in their 123-116 victory over the Celtics in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals.

But perhaps the oddest part about his unlikely presence was that it was not odd at all — at least not for the Heat, who have a league-high nine undrafted players on their 17-man roster. On Wednesday, three of those players — Strus, Gabe Vincent and Caleb Martin — scored 15 points each while combining to shoot 16 of 27 from the field.

"I think it's something unique that we've all gone through," said Vincent, the team's starting point guard, "and we know how difficult it can be. So we just try to motivate each other and keep each other going."

The conference finals have coincided with pre-draft buzz of the highest (and tallest) order. On Tuesday, as N.B.A. hopefuls began to cycle through Chicago for the league's scouting combine, the San Antonio Spurs landed the No. 1 pick in the draft, set for June 22 at Barclays Center.

Barring a cosmic catastrophe, the Spurs will select Victor Wembanyama, a 7-foot-4 teenager from France and the most celebrated prospect since LeBron James. A gifted player who has size and skill, along with an innate feel for the game — yes, he really did tip-dunk his own 3-point miss earlier this season — Wembanyama could be a transformational force for the Spurs.

But beyond Wembanyama and the rest of this year's picks, teams have another roster-building option at their disposal: plumbing the pool of the undrafted, a strategy that has proved increasingly viable as basketball continues to expand its global reach and more talent rises to the surface.

"When you're in that position, you're willing to do anything," said Martin, who was an all-conference player at Nevada but went undrafted in 2019. "And I think more teams are starting to appreciate that."

Consider that 126 undrafted players, representing about a quarter of the league, found their way onto N.B.A. rosters this season. But no team leaned on the overshadowed, the snubbed and the slighted more than the Heat did, with undrafted players scoring a league-high 33.8 percent of the team's points during the regular season, according to N.B.A. Advanced Stats. The Nets ranked second in that category, with undrafted players accounting for 24 percent of the team's points.

Heat Coach Erik Spoelstra noted that two of his best players — Bam Adebayo and Tyler Herro, who has been sidelined with a broken hand since the first round — were high first-round picks. Forward Jimmy Butler, who was brilliant on Wednesday, collecting 35 points, 7 assists and 6 steals, joined the team in a sign-and-trade with the Philadelphia 76ers in 2019. But he was a late first-round pick, by Chicago, in 2011. In other words, the Heat like name-brand stars, too.

Some teams, like Oklahoma City and San Antonio, have stockpiled draft picks through trades, but the Heat have not. Instead, Spoelstra said, the team has needed to be creative about how to fill out its roster. Many of Miami's undrafted players have come up through its G League affiliate, the Sioux Falls Skyforce. Spoelstra said players in the G League or from overseas are often just as talented as some N.B.A. reserves.

"It's all about timing and fit, and what a player's fortitude is," he said, adding: "If you have a big dream and want to be challenged, we feel like this can be the place for a lot of those kinds of guys."

And if Spoelstra needs any help gauging (or enhancing) that fortitude, he can turn to Udonis Haslem, a power forward who went undrafted in 2002, spent his first professional season in France and joined the Heat the following year. Now 42, Haslem has been with Miami ever since.

No team has mined more overlooked talent than Miami.

"I think organizations are doing a better job of doing their homework and not just assuming, because a guy didn't get drafted, that he can't help you win," Haslem said. "You can't measure character or discipline or accountability at the draft combine, and a lot of those things sometimes get overlooked."

Haslem has played sparingly in recent seasons, but he has outsize influence in the locker room, including as the self-appointed dean of the undrafted. Those who are new to the team get a one-on-one conversation with Haslem, who tells them about his three championship rings and about how anything is possible. But they had better be prepared to work, because Haslem will be watching.

"I take it personally when an undrafted guy comes here," he said. "I want them to be successful because I feel like that's a piece of my legacy."

His legacy now includes the likes of Vincent, who tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee as a junior at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He was early in his rehab when Joe Pasternack was hired as the team's new coach.

"The first call I got," Pasternack said, "was from Gabe Vincent saying: 'Coach, tell me what you need me to do. Do you need me to call the players? Set up a team meeting?' That left an impression."

Vincent was back in uniform for the start of his senior season. But after averaging just 12.4 points a game, he landed in the G League with the Stockton Kings. A few weeks into Vincent's first season there, Pasternack had an opening for a full-time assistant and offered him the job. Pasternack believed in Vincent as a player, but he also knew he was grinding away without any guarantees.

"I just saw so many kids in the G League not going anywhere," Pasternack said. "But I also thought he was such an unbelievable leader that he'd be a great assistant coach."

Vincent politely declined the offer.

"I was sort of like 'Joe, what are you talking about?'" Vincent recalled, laughing. "I don't know why he keeps telling that story, and I've told him that: 'Joe, this does not make you look good!'"

Vincent signed a two-way deal with the Heat during the 2019-20 season and slowly began to work his way into the rotation. He averaged a career-high 9.4 points a game this season. He is due for a significant payday this summer as an unrestricted free agent.

Strus thought he could someday make a living playing basketball in Europe. That was the goal when he was at Lewis University. It was not until his second day on campus after transferring to DePaul that his mind-set changed. Dave Leitao, who was then the team's coach, told him that he could have a future in the N.B.A.

"It was huge," Strus said. "I'd never been told that in my life."

As a first-year pro during the 2019-20 season, Strus was cut by the Celtics and then tore his left A.C.L. in a game with the G League's Windy City Bulls. He signed a two-way deal with the Heat the following season. On Wednesday, he grabbed the game's final rebound.

"I've taken advantage of every opportunity they've given me here," he said.

PRO BASKETBALL | W.N.B.A. SEASON PREVIEW

New Faces, New Rules And a Heralded Return

By SARA ZIEGLER

The W.N.B.A. begins its 27th season on Friday with new rules, new rosters and one big return. Here's what to expect.

Brittney Griner is back.

After nearly 10 months in detention in Russia, **Brittney Griner** is playing basketball again.

Griner's detention clouded the W.N.B.A. season last year. She was arrested at an airport near Moscow on drug charges in February 2022, and subsequently convicted and sentenced to nine years in a penal colony. The league regularly paid tribute to her during the season, and her fellow players spoke out on her behalf.

Griner was released in a prisoner swap in December, and after time spent recovering privately, she signed a one-year contract to return to the Phoenix Mercury.

Griner played no basketball during her imprisonment and is still working to get back into game shape. "Everybody tells me to give myself grace and that it's going to take time," she said at a news conference in April, "but that's the hardest thing to do for a pro athlete because we always want to be right back at our top shape."

Griner and the Mercury open their season on Friday in Los Angeles against the Sparks.

On each coast, a superteam takes shape.

The off-season was dominated by free-agent signings and trades that established what could be two superteams: the Liberty and the Las Vegas Aces.

The Liberty made three key moves: First, they traded with the Connecticut Sun for **Jonquel Jones**, the league's most valuable player in 2021. Then they landed one of the top free agents: **Breanna Stewart**, the 2018 M.V.P., who had won two championships in Seattle. Finally, they signed the league's active assists leader, **Courtney Vandersloot**. Those three join the returnees Betnijah Laney and Sabrina Ionescu, who have each made an All-Star team.

The reigning champion Aces already featured an impressive collection of talent: last year's M.V.P., A'ja Wilson (who also won in 2020); Chelsea Gray, the 2022 finals M.V.P.; and their fellow All-Stars, Jackie Young and Kelsey Plum. And then they went and signed **Candace Parker**, the two-time M.V.P., two-time champion and seven-time All-Star. They also picked up the veteran **Alysha Clark**, who won two titles with Seattle.

The rest of the league isn't backing down from the superteams. "In the best movies, the underdog ends up on top," Elena Delle Donne of the Washington Mystics told reporters this month.

But still, the Aces and Liberty are far and away the betting favorites to win it all.

Rookies look to make their mark.

Some of the newest W.N.B.A. players are just weeks removed from finishing their college careers. How they make that transition will be crucial to the fortunes of their new teams.

Aliyah Boston was the obvious choice of the Indiana Fever as the No. 1 overall pick in the April draft. Boston, who led South Carolina to a national title in 2022 and back to the Final Four this year, is expected to be a franchise cornerstone for the Fever as they rebuild. Though the competition she faces will be tougher in the W.N.B.A., Boston should be able to score more easily without facing the same double and triple teams she saw in college.

With this year's No. 2 pick, Minnesota drafted **Diamond Miller**, who led Maryland with nearly 20 points a game in the 2022-23 season. Miller is a versatile and athletic wing who should pair well with Napheesa Collier.

Haley Jones, the No. 6 pick in the draft, was a leader for four years at Stanford, including the Cardinals' 2021 title run. She slots in well on an Atlanta Dream team looking for more playmakers.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

PRIZED CATCH The Liberty signed Breanna Stewart, the former M.V.P. in Seattle, as a free agent.



NEW PLACES Candace Parker, left, joined Las Vegas, and Jonquel Jones, right, went to the Liberty.

New rules will add new wrinkles.

The league also updated its rule book this off-season.

W.N.B.A. coaches will now be able to challenge one — and only one — call per game. Coaches can ask for reviews on three kinds of calls: a foul called on their team, an out-of-bounds call, or a violation for goaltending or basket interference. Coaches will be limited to one challenge even if the challenge is successful, and even if the game goes to overtime.

Officials may also now penalize players for committing a foul during a fast break without making a legitimate play on the ball. For this, a transition take foul, the offensive team will be awarded one free throw, which can be taken by any player on the floor, and the offensive team will keep control of the ball.

The W.N.B.A. also has new guidelines governing sideline behavior. In an effort to limit disruptions and distractions, the league is telling players who are not in the game that they may not stand "for a prolonged period." Players and coaches are also prohibited from "attempting to distract their opponents in an unsportsmanlike manner." Teams could receive a delay-of-game warning or a technical foul for a violation.

SOCCER

U.S. Cities Vie to Land Title Match For '26 Cup

By VICTOR MATHER

It has been almost five years since a bid from the United States, Canada and Mexico beat out a proposal from Morocco to host soccer's 2026 men's World Cup. Now the competition has turned intramural.

The stadiums for the tournament have been chosen, but FIFA, world soccer's governing body, has not yet said which one will host the final game.

Officials from New York City and New Jersey are starting a concerted push to land that final for MetLife Stadium at the Meadowlands, including an event in Times Square on Thursday morning with Gov. Phil Murphy of New Jersey and Mayor Eric Adams of New York.

"Eric and I believe strongly that we have the most compelling case by far to get the best package, including the final," Murphy said in a joint interview with Adams on Wednesday morning.

At most other World Cups, there is an obvious choice for the final game. Moscow, Rio de Janeiro and Paris were always going to be chosen when their countries hosted the tournament. But there are several attractive candidates for the 2026 final, to be played July 19. (Though Mexico and Canada will host some of the tournament's 104 games, the bidders agreed that the majority of the matches — and everything from the quarterfinals on — would be in the United States.)

The only previous time the United States hosted the World Cup, in 1994, the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif., got the final. This time, SoFi Stadium is the Los Angeles-area site on the list of stadiums for 2026. But that stadium was built primarily for N.F.L. football, and there is concern that the field there is too narrow for soccer, which would require removing some seats, and reducing capacity.

New York/New Jersey, Dallas and L.A. make their pitches.

Dallas has also emerged as a leading candidate, in part because nearby AT&T Stadium can potentially be expanded to offer over 100,000 seats for soccer.

But Adams and Murphy are making their case that the New York City area outshines those places as the best spot for the game.

"Yes, L.A. is known for its extravaganza and its appeal of Hollywood," Adams said. "But I think New York is the largest stage."

Murphy said: "New York is the international capital of the world. With no disrespect to Dallas, we're taking about *New York*."

The other contenders are not lying down. "We are making our case to the committee right now that we would be the perfect site for the semifinals and finals," Dan Hunt, president of Dallas's bid, told the local NBC affiliate late last year. "We have two great airports, we have the infrastructure, we have the hotels, we have AT&T Stadium. We have what it will take to host what I call 'the Super Bowl on steroids.'"

Kathryn Schloessman, head of the Los Angeles bid, said, "Our region is so fortunate to have a world-class stadium and infrastructure to be in consideration for hosting the final and other prominent matches."

The decision will ultimately be made by top FIFA officials, up to and including President Gianni Infantino, with input from the regional governing body, Concacaf, and U.S. Soccer. It is expected in early fall.

Whether the New York region wins the final or not, there are likely to be about eight games at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. "Eight games is like eight Super Bowls in six weeks, so no matter what the games look like it's going to be a huge success," Murphy said. "We'll sell every one of them out; it doesn't matter who's playing."

"But clearly to get the final — and we think we're in the best position to get the final — is the icing on the cake that is almost unparalleled in sports," he added. "There is both prestige and I'm sure an extra boost to the regional economy."

If a "huge success" is coming either way, why is there such a hunger to land the final? Adams acknowledged another motivation: "I'm extremely competitive, and I want to beat other cities to have the final. We were chosen, now it's time for us to bring home the Cup."

At the End of Griner's Ordeal, a Changing W.N.B.A. Awaits

From First Sports Page

Russian customs officials detained Griner at an airport near Moscow in February 2022 after finding vape cartridges with hashish oil in her luggage as she returned to play for UMMC Yekaterinburg, a professional team that reportedly paid her at least $1 million. She was convicted on drug charges and sentenced to nine years in a penal colony, but she was freed in a prisoner swap for Viktor Bout, a Russian arms dealer, in December. The U.S. State Department said that she had been wrongfully detained.

The W.N.B.A., now in its 27th season, has long watched dozens of its players go overseas each off-season in search of higher pay, though the league has been trying to offer them ways to make money stateside. The maximum salary in the W.N.B.A. is about $230,000, and was half as much just a few years ago. Top players like Griner, a seven-time All-Star center, can command hundreds of thousands more from international teams. Many people were not aware of this dynamic until Griner's detention and expressed shock and frustration on social media and on television shows.

"As much as I would love to, you know, pay my light bill for the love of the game, I can't," Griner said last month during her first news conference since she was freed.

The Associated Press reported that 67 of the league's 144 players still played internationally this off-season, indicative of the strong pull of money. But in light of Griner's detention and the war in Ukraine, players eschewed the historically lucrative Russian organizations for teams in countries like Italy and Turkey. About 90 players played internationally five years ago.

Collier, 26, who has played for international teams, said younger players gain important experience overseas. But she said she doubted she would play abroad again after Griner's experience and because she wants to spend more time with her daughter, who will turn 1 next Thursday.

Building Household Names

W.N.B.A. officials have attributed players' modest salaries to its historically modest — and perhaps meager — revenue and media attention. Many W.N.B.A. players have become accustomed to entering the league with less media fanfare and, at times, playing before far smaller audiences than they had in college.

"I've been a part of it when I was in college and it was the hottest ticket in the country," said Mercury guard Diana Taurasi, who starred at UConn and before becoming the W.N.B.A.'s career leading scorer. She continued: "How do we make the hottest ticket in the country for the best basketball players in the world in the W.N.B.A.? That, to me, it only happens in women's sports where the adolescents get more attention than the grown-ups."

Griner, who joined the Mercury in 2013, has been a star since she became known for dunking at Baylor. At her first news conference since returning, Griner pleaded with the unusual swell of reporters to come and cover games during the season, too.

"The league is a league that needs celebrity," said Candy Lee, a professor of journalism and integrated marketing communications at Northwestern. She added: "The league can take advantage of it. The Mercury can take advantage of it."

The surge in W.N.B.A. interest because of Griner has dovetailed with broader momentum for women's sports. The N.C.A.A. women's basketball championship game last month shattered records with an average of 9.9 million viewers, according to ESPN.

W.N.B.A. teams will play a record 40 regular-season games this year, and the league signed a multiyear deal with Scripps to televise Friday night games on the network ION. Griner's first two regular-season games, on Friday in Los Angeles and Sunday in Phoenix against Chicago, will be nationally televised by ESPN. Viewership during the 2022 regular season rose 16 percent over the previous year, according to the league, making it the most-watched season in 14 years.

Flip on the N.B.A. playoffs and you're likely to spot a W.N.B.A. player, like Candace Parker of the Las Vegas Aces or Arike Ogunbowale of the Dallas Wings, featured in a commercial. Puma recently announced the second signature shoe for the Liberty's Breanna Stewart. Griner, who became the first openly gay athlete signed to Nike in 2014, remains with the brand, a spokesman confirmed, but the company did not say whether it planned to market her this season.



MATT YORK/ASSOCIATED PRESS



CAITLIN O'HARA/REUTERS

Brittney Griner was determined to reclaim her life with the Phoenix Mercury. Left, Griner visiting a mural in Phoenix by Antoinette Cauley that depicts Griner and other overseas detainees.

A few weeks before Griner was detained, W.N.B.A. Commissioner Cathy Engelbert announced that the league had raised $75 million from investors that she planned to use for marketing and revamping the league's business model.

Collegiate stars like Angel Reese of Louisiana State, Paige Bueckers of UConn and Caitlin Clark of Iowa are poised to enter the league in the next few years, bringing their dynamic games, name recognition and national television exposure.

"That's why we're putting so many marketing dollars behind some of our star players," Engelbert said. She added: "That's how you build household names."

The Travel Debate

Concerns about Griner's security while traveling since her detention have added to the fiery debate about travel in the W.N.B.A.

Unlike in the N.B.A. or on many top men's and women's college teams, W.N.B.A. players fly commercial airlines to games. It has long been a sore point for players, who have had to sleep in airports or rush to games because of delays. It is widely believed that Griner will need to travel privately this year.

"Would definitely like to make all those flights private," Griner said. "That would be nice. Not just for me and my team, but for the whole league. We all deserve it. We work so hard. We do so much and it would be nice where we finally get to the point where we get to that point, too."

The W.N.B.A. has said that it cannot afford over $20 million a season for charter flights, even though some owners might be willing to provide them for their own teams. Charter flights are prohibited in the collective bargaining agreement between team owners and the players' union as an unfair competitive advantage. The W.N.B.A. fined the Liberty $500,000 for secretly using charter flights during the 2021 season.

In April, the league announced that it would have charter flights for teams playing on consecutive days during the regular season and for all playoff games. The W.N.B.A. had made exceptions in similar situations previously.

"We're going to chip away at this as we continue to build this model," Engelbert said. "Because once you do it, you have to do it essentially for perpetuity, so we want to make sure we're not putting the financial viability of the league at risk."

On Thursday, the players' union announced a deal with Priority Pass to give players access to airport lounges, which could provide food, spa treatments and places to sleep. Nneka Ogwumike, the star Los Angeles forward who is president of the players' union, said in a statement that she hoped other "partners" would see the deal as a "call to action."

In a statement, Terri Jackson, the union's executive director, called the deal a "significant step in the right direction."

'She Impacts the World'

Vince Kozar, the president of the Mercury, described an ominous cloud over the franchise last season at every practice, media session and game without Griner. Brief video clips that emerged of her in Russia showed her handcuffed or caged. The day Griner was sentenced, Mercury players came together and cried — then had to play a game. "You carried that weight of the uncertainty and the fear," Kozar said.

It finally, suddenly, parted upon Griner's release in December. Kozar did not expect Griner to announce immediately whether she would again play in the W.N.B.A. But when she returned to the United States, she said she would.

Griner may have been the most plugged-in W.N.B.A. player last season. Players from around the league sent her letters, their only means of communicating with her. In letters with Kozar, Griner was not asking about the organization and its going-ons as much as informing him about them.

"It was just a reminder that basketball was one of the things that had been taken away from her, this thing how she impacts the world that's central to her identity, that so many of her relationships are built around," Kozar said.

Griner will lead the league in hugs this season. She scribbled autographs and posed for selfies at a preseason game last week. It was her first action since she'd returned. A modest crowd roared during Griner's pregame introduction. Mercury Coach Vanessa Nygaard said chills ran down her spine.

Griner towered over everyone else on the court, securing her first bucket on a quick turnaround a minute into the game. All right, here we go, Griner thought to herself. So much had seemed unfamiliar to her lately. Jet-setting for a living? That's not her, she said with a laugh. But that first shot, she thought, that felt comfortable.

Larry Mahan, Who Was Called The Elvis of Rodeo, Is Dead at 79

By ALEX WILLIAMS

Larry Mahan, an eight-time rodeo world champion and swashbuckling showman who was once called "rodeo's first matinee idol," and who brokered that reputation into side careers as a Hollywood actor, a country singer and a purveyor of must-have cowboy boots, died on May 7 at his home in Valley View, Texas. He was 79.

Bobby Steiner, a friend and a fellow member of the National Rodeo Hall of Fame, said the cause was bone cancer.

Even without his oft-noted rock-star swagger, Mahan (pronounced MAY-han) would have qualified as a titan of the sport. Competing in bull riding, saddle bronc riding and bareback riding, he won six World All-Around Cowboy championships in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, including five in a row from 1966 to 1970.

He added another in 1973, and he also won world bull-riding championships in 1965 and 1967.

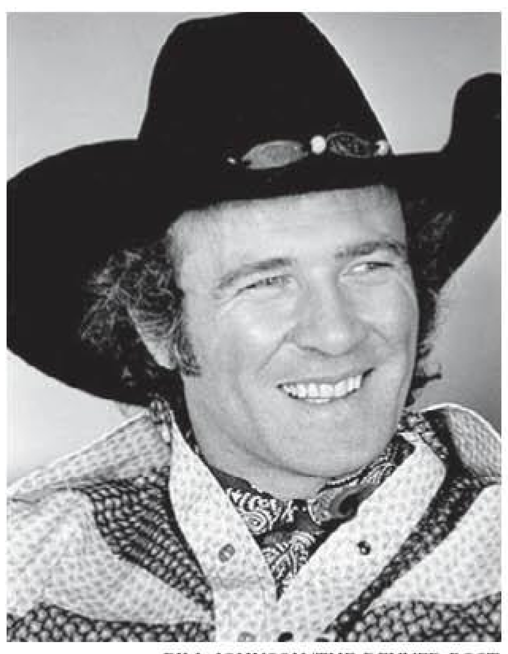
Ah, but the swagger. Mahan emerged as a new-breed competitor in the mod 1960s and the breezy 1970s.

"With his flared double-knit slacks and Cassini shirts," The Austin American-Statesman observed in 1971, he was "the antonym of the old cowhand from the Rio Grande bit."

He climbed onto bulls and broncs wearing shoulder-brushing locks, as well as silk shirts and chaps in a rainbow of colors. Away from the arena, he carried himself like the star he was — tooling around in a Jaguar, traversing the country in his twin-engine Cessna, appearing as Johnny Carson's guest on "The Tonight Show." Some likened him to Elvis Presley.

"Football had Joe Namath, boxing had Muhammad Ali, and rodeo had Larry Mahan," Steiner said in a phone interview. "I don't know that anybody will ever know what 'it' is, but he had 'it.'"

He also helped bring mainstream visibility to what was traditionally a regional sport. Long before Martha Stewart and the Kardashians, the flamboyant Mahan dabbled in celebrity brand extension; in 1967, Time magazine called him the "Grey Flannel Cowboy."



BILL JOHNSON/THE DENVER POST, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Larry Mahan in 1979.



LMPC, VIA GETTY IMAGES

A poster for a 1973 movie about Mr. Mahan, which won the Academy Award for best documentary feature.

Branching into Western wear, he developed a line of cowboy togs including signature boots that became as coveted among lonesome-trail types as prime Air Jordans are among sneakerheads. (Josh Brolin's character asks for a pair of Larry Mahans, size 11, when shopping for fresh clothes in the 2007 film "No Country for Old Men.")

He also made his matinee-idol reputation at least a tad literal, studying acting in Los Angeles and appearing in "The Honkers," a 1972 rodeo drama starring James Coburn and Slim Pickens; "Sixpack Annie," a racy 1975 drive-in special; and "The Good Old Boys," a star-studded 1995 television western directed by and starring Tommy Lee Jones.

Even music beckoned — if briefly. In 1976, Mahan released a country album, "King of the Rodeo," on Warner Bros. Records. "Couldn't sing a lick," he recalled in an interview with the newspaper The Oklahoman. "It was a flop, but it was fun."

Perhaps his biggest mark on popular culture came in 1973, when he was the subject of "The Great American Cowboy," which won the Academy Award for best documentary feature. That movie, directed by Kieth Merrill, chronicles his quest to reclaim the All-Around World title from Phil Lyne, a younger Texan champion who had seized his mantle after Mahan scuffled through injury-marred years in 1971 and 1972. The American-Statesman called the movie "a stunning look at the least understood anachronism in modern America — the cowboy."

Larry Edward Mahan was born on Nov. 21, 1943, in Salem, Ore., the eldest of four children of Ray and Reva (English) Mahan.

He grew up in the nearby town of Brooks, and his parents bought him his first horse — a half Arabian, half quarter horse that cost $125 — when he was 7 or 8. He entered a children's rodeo weeks later and took home a $6 prize riding calves.

Larry continued to rack up wins in dozens of youth contests while in high school. He joined the professional tour in 1963. Two years later, at 21, he took home the national bull-riding title and $25,000 (the equivalent of about $245,000 today). A year after that, he won his first all-around title. To the rodeo world, a legend was born.

But for all his glittering escapades, he never lost sight of the stakes — especially when riding a 1,500-pound Brahma bull, a feat that has been called "the most dangerous eight seconds in sports."

After he suffered a broken leg at a rodeo in Ellensburg, Wash., in 1971, Sports Illustrated wrote, "Outsiders sometimes protest that rodeo is cruel to animals, which must have struck Mahan as ironic once the horse stopped dragging him like a rag doll along the hard ground."



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mr. Mahan in Oklahoma City in 1974. He helped bring mainstream visibility to the regional sport.



FRANK MICELOTTA/PICTUREGROUP, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

From left, Mr. Mahan with Storme Warren and Hunter Hayes at the 2011 American Country Music Awards in Las Vegas.

He echoed that point in an interview with the same magazine two years later: "Bulls are the meanest, rankest creatures on earth. Horses don't try to step on you when they throw you off. They don't want to trip. Bulls love to step on you, or whip your face into the back of their skull and break your nose and knock out your teeth."

Mahan is survived by his daughters, Lisa Renee Mahan and Alli Eliza Mahan, and his sisters, Susan Stockton-Simpson, Jody Thompson and Dana Mahan Hermreck. His son, Tyrone, died in 2020, and his wife, Julanne Read Mahan, died last year. His

A swashbuckling showman and country singer with his own line of cowboy boots.

marriages to Darlene Mahan, Robin Holtze and Diana McNab ended in divorce.

Along with fame came famous friends, including the country stars Jerry Jeff Walker and Tanya Tucker and the Dallas Cowboys fullback and rodeo standout Walt Garrison. But in his social life, Mahan rarely let the revelry get out of hand.

"He wouldn't go to the cowboy bars and celebrate at night," Steiner said. "Back in those days, most people did the 'I'm a cowboy and I'm going to party my butt off' thing. But he took it seriously. He had to. He was in three events every day. I was a bull rider, and that was tough enough."

Mahan, in fact, got his highs in other ways. "Winning is to me what alcohol is to the alcoholic, what dope is to the addict," he said in a 1975 interview with the New York Times sports columnist Red Smith. "I've got to have it."

Mark Gietzen, 69, Who Was a Zealous Leader in the Anti-Abortion Movement

By ALEX TRAUB

Mark Gietzen, who gained prominence as one of the nation's most zealous grass-roots opponents of abortion, died on Tuesday. He was 69.

The Kansas Republican Party announced his death. The Wichita Eagle reported that Mr. Gietzen died when his Cessna 172 crashed a few miles northeast of Chambers, Neb.

Last August, in what would turn out to be his final large-scale political initiative, Mr. Gietzen (pronounced GEET-zin) spent nearly $120,000 to finance a recount of the decisive vote in Kansas to preserve abortion rights. That month, Mr. Gietzen told The Eagle that the expenditure would make it harder for him to renovate his Cessna, which he said he had been working on for 15 years.

The recount did not change the outcome.

Mr. Gietzen had been prominent in Kansas politics since the so-called Summer of Mercy in 1991, when thousands of people converged in Wichita to block access to abortion clinics, risking arrest.

A resident of Wichita since the late 1970s who had long been interested in Republican politics, Mr. Gietzen threw himself into political organizing after that summer and became chairman of the Republican organization in Sedgwick County, which includes Wichita. With his help, the Republicans won the Kansas House of Representatives, inaugurating a run of control of both state legislative chambers that has continued ever since.

Mr. Gietzen devoted much of his time to an organization of which he was chairman, the Kansas Coalition for Life, and to its protests against Dr. George Tiller, a Wichita abortion doctor. The long-simmering battle against Dr. Tiller's practice helped make the city a staging ground for the national abortion debate.

Mr. Gietzen presided over a network of hundreds of volunteers who protested against Dr. Tiller in shifts. They tried to persuade patients arriving at his clinic to change their minds — counting "saves" for women who decided not to get abortions.



MIKE HUTMACHER/THE WICHITA EAGLE VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mark Gietzen, right, with Richard Ranzau, a member of the Sedgwick County commission in Kansas, and others in 2011.

Activists blockaded his clinic, campaigned to have him prosecuted, tailed him with hidden cameras, sued him, threatened him. One bombed his clinic. Another tried to kill him in 1993, firing five shots, wounding both arms.

Dr. Tiller defiantly dug in, expanding his clinic and beefing up its security.

The battle ended on a Sunday morning in 2009, when Mr. Tiller was shot to death while attending church. His clinic closed, and Mr. Gietzen found himself a frequent interview subject in the national news media.

"It looks like our prayer was answered," Mr. Gietzen told The New York Times. "We would have liked to have done this a different way, though. Now we have thousands of people bad-mouthing us, refusing to donate, telling us our website incited this."

Mr. Gietzen was born on Feb. 9, 1954, and grew up in Glen Ullin, N.D. a tiny city near Bismarck. His father was involved in the state's fledgling anti-abortion movement.

He served in the Marines and, in the late 1970s, earned an associate degree in aviation maintenance from the Spartan College of Aeronautics and Technology in Tulsa, Okla. Soon after that, he moved to Wichita to work for Boeing.

He was a frequent unsuccessful candidate in local elections, including for mayor of Wichita.

He was the single parent of three children. Information about survivors was not immediately available.

The 2004 book, "What's the Matter With Kansas?," which examined the rise of populist conservatism in the state, depicted Mr. Gietzen as a symbol of some of the forces driving formerly liberal Americans to repudiate the Democratic Party.

He spent $120,000 on a recount of the vote to preserve abortion rights in Kansas.

"Gietzen was building a social movement, one convert at a time," the author, Thomas Frank, wrote. "On the left it is common to hear descriptions of the backlash as a strictly top-down affair in which Republican spellbinders rally a demographically shrinking sector of the population for one last, tired drive. What the Wichita Republicans have accomplished, though, should dispel this myth forever. They shouted their fighting creed to every resident of the city, sharpening the differences, polarizing the electorate, letting everyone know the stakes."

Mr. Frank continued: "Gietzen and company wanted not only Wichita's votes but its participation. They were going to change the world."

Deaths

CUSHING—Justine B.
Mlle. Cote d'Agneau, Jr. May you rest in peace and rise in glory.
David Parshall

FENSTER—Dr. Abe.
Abe Fenster, Former Professor of Psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice/City University of New York, and founding Chair of the Psychology Department there, died peacefully on May 17, 2023. In addition to his faculty position, Abe maintained a private practice in psychotherapy in Manhattan for many years. He is survived by his son David (Jennifer), grandson Max, and wife, Judy. Details of a memorial service will be announced at a later date.

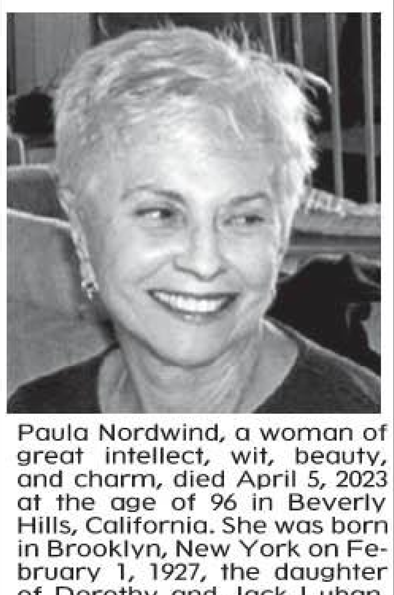
JAO—Andrea ("Marian") T., PhD,
passed away on Friday, May 12, 2023 at her home in Manhattan. She was preceded in death by her late father Perico Jao. She is survived by her mother Angelita Jao, her sisters Socorro Jao, Perlita Schorfheide, and Maria Felicitas Jao; her brother-in-law Frank Schorfheide and nephew David Jao. Andrea will be truly missed by all whose lives she touched.

McGRATH—John William,
passed away on May 3rd. He was 90 years old. Better known as "Jack," he was the oldest child of Hugh and Marion McGrath. He grew up in New Rochelle, NY, graduated from The Canterbury School, Williams College and New York Law School. From 1955-1957, he served in the United States Army as a counterintelligence agent. He was a partner at the law firm Lane and Mittendorf; when he retired in 2019, he was of counsel at Gallagher Lagalante. Jack had a lifelong passion for politics. He was actively involved in many campaigns and served as Chief Advanceman for Governor Nelson Rockefeller in two presidential campaigns. An avid golfer, gardener, and baker, he served on committees at the University Club and was a Brother of Holland Lodge No. 8, F.A.&M. He is survived by his wife of 35 years, Patricia Ogden McGrath; his son, John W. McGrath (Johanna); his three grandsons Hogan McGrath, Dylan Diouf, and Leo Diouf; his three stepchildren Alix Ogden, Alfred T. Ogden III, Fell Gray and their families; a brother Hugh McGrath and two sisters, Mary Elizabeth Hutcoe and Julianne McGrath. His daughter, Paula McGrath Diouf predeceased him. A service will be held on Tuesday, May 23 at 4pm at the Church of the Heavenly Rest, 1085 Fifth Ave. at 4pm. In lieu of flowers, the family encourages donations to the Paul McGrath Scholarship Fund at The Canterbury School, 101 Aspetuck Avenue, New Milford, CT 06776.

MOORE—Alicia M. (Hills),
92, wife of Peter L. Moore of Labor-in-Vain Road, Ipswich, MA, died Friday, May 12, 2023 in her home. Born in Salem, she was one of the two children of the late Carroll B. and Consuelo E. (Bates) Hills. She grew up in Ipswich, where she described an idyllic childhood of exploring vernal pools, rowing on the marsh, and building model airplanes. A graduate of Ipswich High School and the Winsor School, she received a B.A. cum laude from Radcliffe College, an M.F.A. from Harvard University, and an M.A. in journalism from Boston University. She was a passionate photographer and artist. A solo bicycle trip in England in 1953 produced hundreds of photographs, sketches, watercolors, and letters. During her 43-year career in New York City, she worked as a reporter and editor of Life Magazine and then Fortune Magazine, with a special expertise in science and technology. Some of her photos appeared in the pages of those magazines; she and Peter also maintained a bathroom darkroom for producing Christmas cards and framed prints. She was an experienced hiker, sailor, and cross-country skier. In later life she became a national-class marathon runner and briefly held the American masters record for 30 km. She and Peter retired to the family home in Ipswich where she was actively involved in the community. For many years Alicia served as chairman of the Ipswich Garden Club programs committee, and was an active member of Ascension Memorial Church where she had been married years before. Everyone who knew Alicia was aware of her wit, her intense curiosity sharpened by the skills of a journalist, and her love of science and nature. New friends quickly got used to receiving postcards and envelopes stuffed with magazines and clippings that she knew would be interesting. In addition to her husband, she is survived by her son Timothy B. Moore and daughter-in-law Rachel Myers Moore of Bordeaux, France, her sister Mathilda M. Hills and spouse Deborah A. Tranter of Wakefield, RI, and her grandson Isaac D. Moore of Flore, England. Donations in her name can be made to the Essex County Greenbelt Association and the Ascension Memorial Church of Ipswich.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF DEATHS MAY BE TELEPHONED FROM WITHIN NYC TO 212-556-3900; OR OUTSIDE NYC TOLL FREE 1-800-458-5522; OR SENT BY EMAIL TO NYTIMES@CLASSIFIEDSPLUS.COM FOR THE FOLLOWING EDITIONS: Until 4:00 PM the day before for Tuesday through Saturday editions, until 4:00 PM on Friday for Sunday's national edition, until 12:45 PM Saturday for Sunday's New York and late national editions, until 2:00 PM Sunday for Monday's editions. Photos must be submitted by noon the day prior to publication Tuesday through Friday. Photos for Saturday, Sunday and Monday must be submitted by 12 noon on Friday.

NORDWIND—Paula.

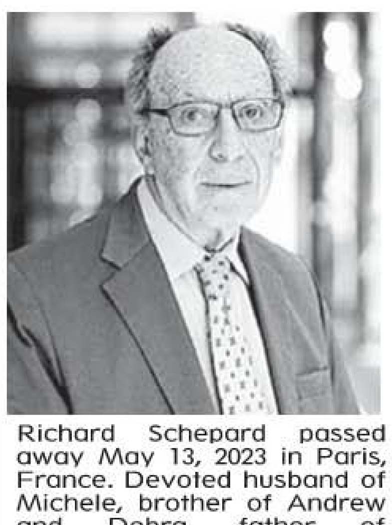


Paula Nordwind, a woman of great intellect, wit, beauty, and charm, died April 5, 2023 at the age of 96 in Beverly Hills, California. She was born in Brooklyn, New York on February 1, 1927, the daughter of Dorothy and Jack Luban. She grew up in Flatbush, in the shadow of Ebbets Field where the Brooklyn Dodgers played. She went to Erasmus High School then started college where she met Aaron Nordwind who became her husband in 1946. A year later they had their first child, Betty, and in 1953 they had a son, Rich. In 1956 they bought a home in Bayside, Queens where they lived happily for almost 50 years. An independent thinker and early and ardent feminist, Paula worked outside the home for most of her adult life, unusual for a woman of her generation. She had jobs as an EKG technician at a hospital and a staff worker on a local newspaper. But she was proudest of going back to school and earning her degree in art history at Queens College—with flying colors. This led to jobs at various museums including the Queens Museum and later the Metropolitan Museum of Art which was like a devout Catholic getting a job at the Vatican. She made friends wherever she went, from her lifelong soulmate Phyllis whom she met as a young mom, to close companions in New York and Los Angeles. Paula and Aaron loved the theater and attended all the great musicals from Broadway's Golden Age. Paula was a devotee of the New York City Ballet and visited museums all around the world—she considered them her "second home." Paula deeply loved her children. Betty is the longtime executive director of the Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law in Los Angeles and Rich was a journalist with the Los Angeles Times and other newspapers. She was close to and proud of her grandchildren as well; Emily is an executive with Paramount Studios and has a family in Atwater, Jake is a writer for Saturday Night Live and lives in both New York and Eagle Rock. She was delighted to get to know her great- grandchildren Esme and Lydie, who loved her Mardi Gras decorated walker with its multicolored beads; Paula was stylish to the very end. Paula and Aaron spent many happy years in West Los Angeles where they met new friends and participated in myriad cultural and volunteer activities. Aaron died in 2017 and Paula moved to an assisted living facility in Beverly Hills where in characteristic Paula Nordwind fashion she was a popular and active member of the community. She developed a close relationship with Diana who became a valued member of our family. Paula lived her life with verve, compassion and laughter. She loved the world and it loved her back. Paula will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

Cushing, Justine
Fenster, Abe
Jao, Andrea
McGrath, John
Moore, Alicia
Nordwind, Paula
Schepard, Richard

Memorialize and celebrate a loved one in the pages of The New York Times.
For more information, visit advertising.nytimes.com or call 1-800-458-5522.
The New York Times NYTIMES.COM

SCHEPARD—Richard.

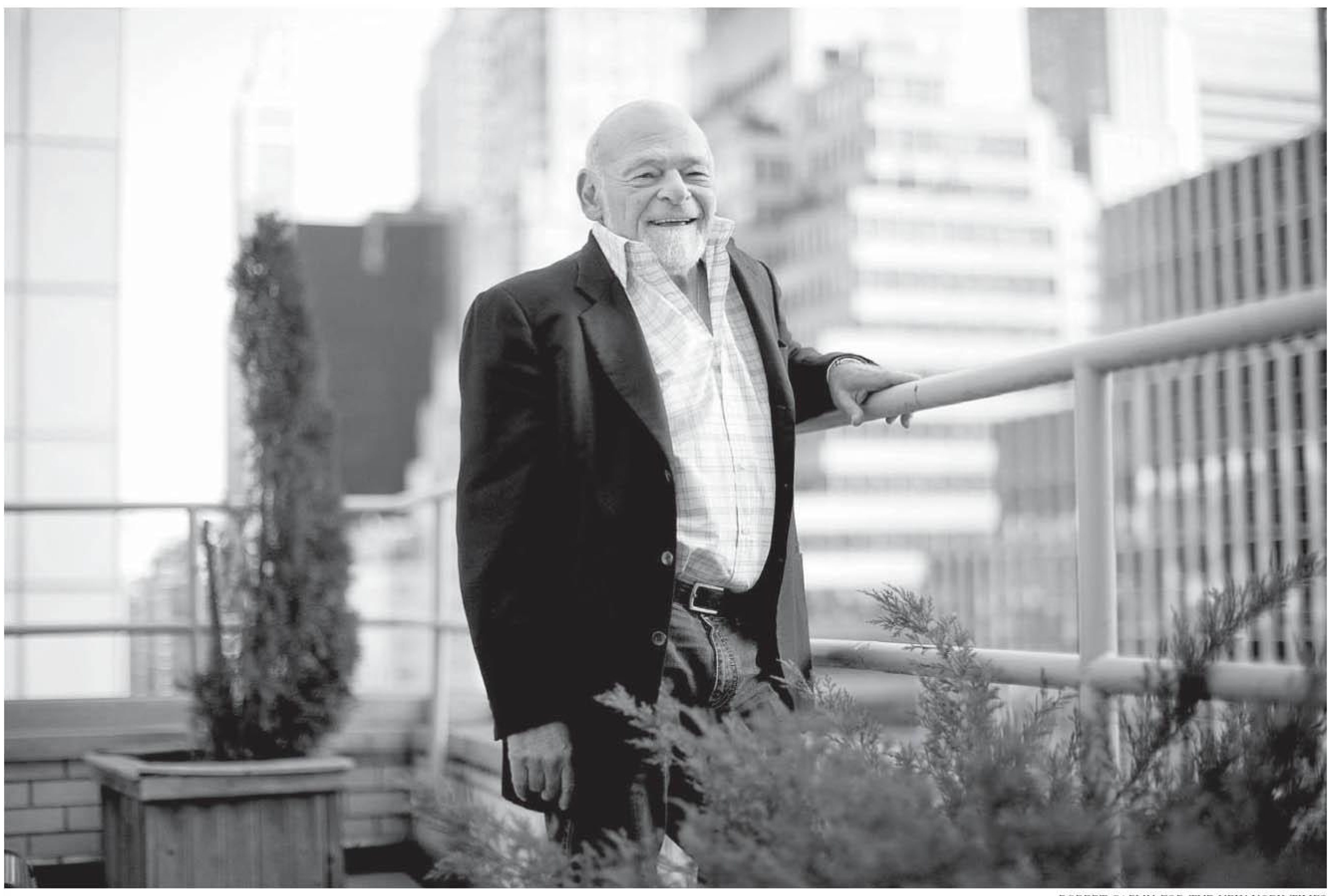


Richard Schepard passed away May 13, 2023 in Paris, France. Devoted husband of Michele, brother of Andrew and Debra, father of Mathieu and Erica; Gregory and Marion; Christopher and Camille; five grandchildren, beloved friend and gifted international attorney. Founding Partner, Bredin Prat, Paris. Assistant General Counsel U.S. Department of Commerce 1977-1979. Graduate of CCNY, NYU Law (first in class), Fulbright Scholar (Sorbonne).
With love,
Herb, Ruth, Nick, Trina, Roberta, Ollie, Marti. Andrew, Debra

The Store
Show you care. Shop The Times.
nytimes.com/store

Sam Zell, 81, Tycoon Whose Big Newspaper Venture Went Bust, Dies

By ROBERT D. McFADDEN



ROBERT CAPLIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Sam Zell in 2012. He called himself "the grave dancer," celebrating his sow's-ear-to-silk-purse triumphs as a high-stakes speculator.

Sam Zell, the real estate tycoon who specialized in distressed assets and acquired The Chicago Tribune, The Los Angeles Times and other storied but troubled newspapers in a widely criticized leveraged buyout of the parent Tribune Company in 2007, died on Thursday. He was 81.

His death was announced in a statement by Equity Group Investments, the firm that Mr. Zell founded and of which he had been chairman. The statement did not say where he died and attributed his only death to "complications from a recent illness."

In a career of spectacular deals celebrated mostly in boardrooms and financial columns, Mr. Zell's venture into the publishing world as chairman of the Tribune Company proved to be a resounding failure, a five-year descent into a maelstrom of rancor, downsizing, management scandals and bankruptcy.

At the end of 2012, the Tribune Company emerged from bankruptcy relatively intact but with half its value and with Mr. Zell gone, replaced by senior creditors, who installed new managers and planned to sell flagship newspapers and other assets. Mr. Zell's personal losses were not heavy by his standards, but the episode was widely seen as a black eye for a real estate mogul out of his depth in newspapers.

The son of Polish Jews who fled to America in 1939 as World War II engulfed Europe, Mr. Zell, an abrasive and eccentric Chicagoan who reveled in testing the limits of business deals as well as motorcycles, amassed one of the nation's largest portfolios of apartments, offices and commercial real estate, mostly by snatching up properties that other investors had snubbed as too risky or even moribund.

He called himself "the grave dancer," celebrating his own sow's-ear-to-silk-purse triumphs as a high-stakes speculator who found opportunities where others saw only stress.

A diminutive man with a raspy voice, a bald pate, squinty eyes and a white beard, he favored gold chains, bright sport shirts and jeans. He often rode a bright yellow Ducati to work at breakneck speeds, and he sometimes went on road trips with a leather-jacketed bunch he called Zell's Angels. He could shock dignitaries with expletives and insults and lace his speeches with profanities. But he would also send hundreds of music boxes to acquaintances at Christmastime.

Unlike Donald J. Trump and Harry Helmsley, who used their names on trophy properties and as self-promotion, Mr. Zell was relatively anonymous for most of his career, known largely in financial and real estate circles as an audacious investor whose vision — to create a national brand — did not materialize because real estate sales are largely local.

Nevertheless, in 2007, the Blackstone Group bought Mr. Zell's firm — then known as Equity Office Properties Trust — for $39 billion. His own fortune was estimated at nearly $5 billion, and with holdings in residential properties, drug and department stores, and energy and electronics companies — a lifetime of acquisitions that made him one of the nation's wealthiest men — he might have retired comfortably in his mid-60s.

But seeing yet another inefficient market, he plunged into the unfamiliar world of newspapers, winning a bidding war for one of the nation's premier media companies, the 160-year-old Tribune empire. Besides the Chicago and Los Angeles newspapers, it included The Baltimore Sun, Newsday, The Hartford Courant, 23 television and radio stations, the Chicago Cubs and Wrigley Field.

Alex Traub contributed reporting.

A Deal Comes With Debt

Like many newspapers, the Tribune properties were hemorrhaging advertising revenues and readers to the internet. The company had been on the auction block for months when Mr. Zell — insisting that his interests were purely economic, not editorial — offered $34 a share in a complex transaction to take the company private under an employee stock-ownership plan.

He acquired control in December 2007 in an $8.2 billion deal whose financing required him to put up only $315 million, but that saddled the employee-owners with more than $13 billion in debt, including $5 billion in existing Tribune obligations. In that highly leveraged buyout, the debt was to be paid off almost entirely by cash generated by the company's continuing operations.

The new corporation was exempt from federal income taxes, and the debt was reduced by the sale of Newsday, the Cubs and Wrigley Field. But employees, who had no say in the deal, assumed a crushing burden and stood to gain only if the company survived, while Mr. Zell, for a relatively modest investment, became chairman and secured an option to buy 40 percent of the company for $500 million if it prospered.

Employees filed a barrage of lawsuits, but they had little effect, and the transaction was widely denounced by media commentators as lopsided — a potentially lucrative coup for Mr. Zell at the expense of thousands of employees, whose jobs, careers, pensions and futures had been mortgaged under a mountain of debt.

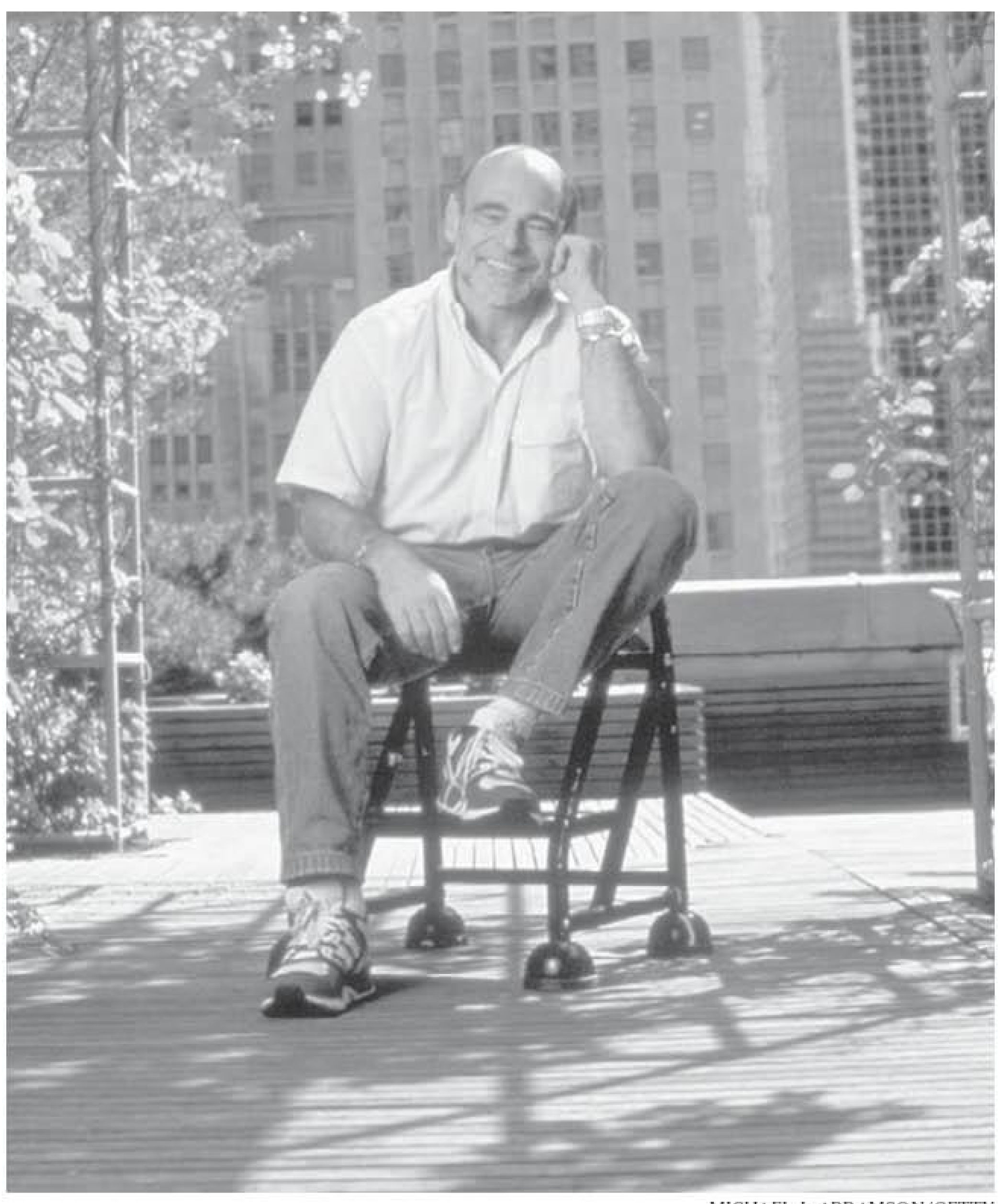
Floyd Norris, in a commentary in The New York Times, called it "one of the most absurd deals ever," adding: "If the company falters, the workers could find that they have no jobs, and a lot of company stock that has little value. Most of Mr. Zell's investment will be classified as a loan to the company, giving him a chance of recovering money even if the stock becomes worthless."

Mr. Zell himself proclaimed, "There's a new sheriff in town!" as he toured Tribune company offices. And he noted in a memo to employees: "I've said repeatedly that no matter what happens in this transaction, my lifestyle won't change. Yours, on the other hand, could change dramatically if we get this right."

He sold assets, prodded workers to greater productivity and cut news budgets and 4,200 jobs. But he had no innovative plan to reinvent the company, whose audiences, ad revenues and financial condition continued to deteriorate. Less than a year after his takeover, the company filed for bankruptcy protection, the largest in American media history, although its operations continued.

Mr. Zell installed managers who, like him, had no newspaper experience. His chief executive, Randy Michaels, a former radio executive and disc jockey, resigned in the face of allegations that he had sexually harassed staff members and alienated many more with outlandish cronyism that included beer-and-poker parties in the office that had once belonged to Col. Robert R. McCormick, the storied Tribune publisher.

"It's normally a shrine," a reporter recalled. "We pretty much desecrated it with gambling, booze and cigars."



MICHAEL L. ABRAMSON/GETTY

Mr. Zell in an undated photo. An eccentric Chicagoan, he reveled in testing the limits of business deals as well as motorcycles.

Quality Criticized

Critics said the newspapers' journalistic quality declined, with lighter news content and occasionally a mingling of advertising and news, widely regarded as a journalistic taboo. Mr. Zell told reporters that they should be part of the quest for revenues, an unsettling prospect for most journalists. Staffers protested, but to no avail.

After four years of negotiations to restructure its debts, the Tribune Company emerged from bankruptcy protection on Dec. 31, 2012, under the control of the investment firms Oaktree Capital and Angelo, Gordon & Company, as well as JP Morgan, the lead lender in the original $8.2 billion buyout.

The company still owned 23 television stations, eight daily newspapers and other media assets, all of which the reorganization plan valued at $4.5 billion after cash distributions and new financing. Mr. Zell, who had voiced some regrets over his decision to buy the company, was replaced as chairman by the new owners, who announced months later that the company was weighing the sale of The Chicago Tribune, The Los Angeles Times and other assets in a plan to focus on its more lucrative television businesses.

In 2016, Tribune Publishing's newspaper arm rebranded itself with a puzzling new name that has since fallen away — Tronc, for "Tribune online content." Company leaders warred with newsroom employees at The Los Angeles Times until Tribune offloaded much of the company in 2018 for $500 million to Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong, a medical entrepreneur, and his wife, Michelle B. Chan.

In another sign of the financial industry's growing influence on the fading newspaper business, Alden Global Capital, a hedge fund that severely cut costs at newspapers it owned, acquired a 32 percent controlling interest in Tribune Publishing and its nine major metropolitan dailies, including The Chicago Tribune and The Daily News of New York.

In 2019, more than a decade after Mr. Zell took the Tribune Company private, he and dozens of other former executives agreed to pay $200 million to settle a lawsuit brought by unsecured creditors. Still, a year later, Forbes said Mr. Zell had a net worth of $4.7 billion and was among the world's 400 richest people.

He was born Samuel Zielonka on Sept. 28, 1941, in Chicago. He was the son of Berek and Ruchla Zielonka, who changed their names to Bernard and Rochelle Zell after immigrating and settling in that city, where the father went into real estate and wholesale jewelry.

Sam grew up an entrepreneur. At 12, he found Hugh Hefner's new Playboy magazine on newsstands, bought copies for 50 cents and peddled them to neighborhood boys for $3 each. At Highland Park High School, his graduation picture in the 1959 yearbook was captioned, "I'm not asking you, I'm telling you."

At the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, he began managing some off-campus housing for a landlord. He and a friend, Robert H. Lurie, who became his business partner, bought cheap homes, fixed them up and rented apartments to fellow students. Mr. Zell graduated in 1963 and earned a law degree in 1966.

In the 1970s and '80s, he and Mr. Lurie acquired diversified national holdings in residential and commercial real estate, anticipating boom-and-bust cycles and picking up distressed assets.

In 1976, Mr. Zell was indicted on a charge of tax evasion in a real estate deal. But the charge was dropped after he agreed to testify against his brother-in-law, Roger Baskes, who was sentenced to prison and served two years.

After Mr. Lurie died in 1990, Mr. Zell had a brush with bankruptcy. But in 1993 he acquired Jacor Communications, a struggling radio business, which he expanded into one of the nation's largest radio chains before selling it in 1998 to Clear Channel Communications for $4.4 billion.

He prospered in publicly traded real estate investment trusts, which attracted investors with tax advantages and large returns. His trusts were among the nation's largest for residential and commercial properties and mobile home parks. His $39 billion sale of Equity Office Properties, one of the largest leveraged buyouts ever, came just before the recession of 2008 and 2009, which devastated real estate markets and the national economy.

The Tribune takeover was explored in "The Deal From Hell: How Moguls and Wall Street Plundered Great American Newspapers" (2011), by James O'Shea, a former senior editor at The Chicago Tribune and The Los Angeles Times. Mr. Zell's life was examined in a 2009 biography by Ben Johnson.

A contrarian in business and private life, Mr. Zell eschewed conventions and was notoriously blunt, often barking at employees and using vulgarities in speeches and meetings. When the former Secretary of State Warren M. Christopher and others met him to voice concern over the health of The Los Angeles Times, Mr. Zell said he did not care what they thought, using an expletive for emphasis.

Mr. Zell, who had homes in Chicago, Sun Valley, Idaho and Malibu, Calif., was an active philanthropist, giving millions to the University of Michigan, Northwestern University and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He was also a major donor to causes in Israel and to the American Jewish Committee, a Jewish primary school in Chicago named for his father, and other cultural and educational institutions.

He was married three times and divorced twice and had three children. He and his third wife, Helen Herzog Fadim, wed in 1999. She survives him, along with two sisters, Julie Baskes and Leah Zell; his daughters, Kellie and JoAnn Zell; his son, Matthew; and nine grandchildren.

T | Store

Support The Times.
Make a difference.

Every purchase supports
New York Times journalism.

nytimes.com/store



6 FILM REVIEW

Love, hate and redemption in a heartless world.

BY MANOHLA DARGIS



10 ART REVIEW

Beyond infinity: Yayoi Kusama's new spectacle pops. BY WILL HEINRICH



16 TELEVISION

Shea Serrano looks homeward to San Antonio.

BY CHRIS VOGNAR



NEWS | CRITICISM

Weekend Arts

The New York Times

FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2023 C1

N



Winds Whisper, And the Birds Sing. It's Kind of Magical.

Simon McBurney conjures an immersive sound world in his 100-speaker production of Mozart's 'Die Zauberflöte.'

The tenor Brenton Ryan, as Monostatos, in a rehearsal for Simon McBurney's production of "Die Zauberflöte," at the Metropolitan Opera.

LILA BARTH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

By ELISABETH VINCENTELLI

Supernatural happenings, curses and romances, heartbreaking arias and vocal fireworks — what's not to love?

Mozart's "Die Zauberflöte" ("The Magic Flute"), a wildly popular gateway opera, has been a frequent presence on stages since its premiere in 1791. It's a fair bet, though, that Simon McBurney's production, which opens at the Metropolitan Opera on Friday, is the first to feature a ringtone duplicating the bird catcher Papageno's five-note musical trademark. Or to use about 100 speakers strategically placed all over the house.

For McBurney, the use of technology is less about embracing the present than about nodding to the creation of "Zauberflöte." That was at Theater auf der Wieden in Vienna, run by the multitasking Emanuel Schikaneder, the opera's librettist and originator of the role of Papageno.

"Schikaneder had the latest ways of making thunder, he had machines make the sound of rain, he had bird calls, he had people making the sound of horses' hooves," McBurney said in an interview. "The use of sound creates a magical world, and yet at the same time at the heart of 'The Magic Flute' are real human concerns."

The juxtapositions of intimacy and cosmic scale, simplicity and complexity, low and high technology have long been emblematic of McBurney's work as a founder and artistic director of the London-based theater company Complicité. Audience members at his solo show "The Encounter" (which had a Broadway run in 2016) experienced the production through earphones, immersing them in sophisticated soundscapes. Something that could have added distance between performer and theatergoer brought them closer.

McBurney experimented with sound again for "Zauberflöte," which was first staged in 2012 at the Dutch National Opera

CONTINUED ON PAGE C4



JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

An Art Fair Grows Exciting

Pamela Rosenkranz's 'Old Tree' (2023), on the High Line, is part of Frieze New York. Page 12.

MANOHLA DARGIS | CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

At Cannes, Star Power and Progress

This year's film festival has more female directors, as well as Johnny Depp as Louis XV.

CANNES, FRANCE — If you are ever at a festival that's showing a new movie from the British director Steve McQueen and he happens to be in the theater and you're tempted to look at your phone, don't. There's a chance that McQueen will get out of his seat, cross the aisle and persuade you to redirect your attention to the big screen, which is exactly what he did Wednesday at the Cannes Film Festival when a mystery offender (not me!) fired up a bright little screen during the premiere of his documentary, "Occupied City."

I wanted all my attention on McQueen's movie, which is being presented out of the main competition. The documentary is heroic in scope and ambition, with a nearly four-and-a-half-hour run time, intermission included. With formal rigor and adamant focus, it maps — street by street, address by address — the catastrophe that befell Amsterdam's Jewish population in World War II. Narrated with implacable calm by a British actress, Melanie Hyams, it was written by McQueen's wife, Bianca Stigter, and inspired by her book "Atlas of an Occupied City: Amsterdam 1940-1945." (Stigter, who's Dutch, also directed the 2022 documentary "Three Minutes: A Lengthening.")

The last time McQueen, who's best known for directing "12 Years a Slave," would have had new work at Cannes was 2020, when the festival was canceled. The pandemic plays a notable role in "Occupied City," which consists entirely of material of present-day Amsterdam, including images of anti-lockdown protests. The juxtaposition of the voice-over and these protests — with their marching cops and running

CONTINUED ON PAGE C9



VIA CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

Among the films at Cannes is "Monster," by the Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda.

WEEKEND ROUNDUP

Get Outside for Some Entertainment

Dancing in the streets, a mindful music festival and contemporary classical on the East River are among the options.



NINA WESTERVELT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A 2019 example of the melting pot of movement that is the Dance Parade. This year's 17th edition on Saturday ends at Tompkins Square Park.

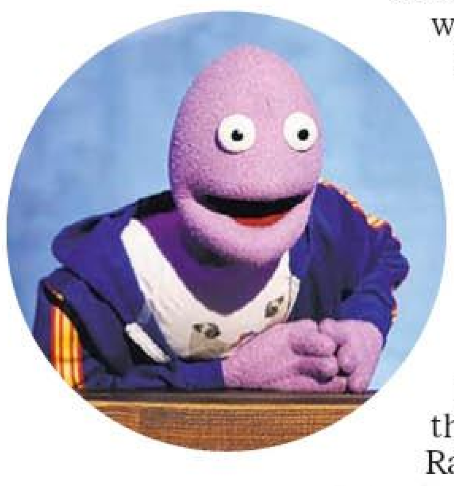
1

COMEDY

RANDY FELTFACE

May 20 at the Bell House, Brooklyn

The Australian puppeteer Heath McIvor originally co-created the purple puppet that would come to be known as Randy Feltface (below) for corporate seminars on workplace bullying that didn't win over the intended audience. A rebrand of Randy as an observational comic, however, has gone gangbusters globally.



First, Randy teamed up with the human comedian Sammy J., and they won the top prize at the 2010 Melbourne International Comedy Festival. Then Randy struck out on his own, competing on NBC's "Bring the Funny" in 2019 as well as releasing multiple specials, most of which are on YouTube. His most recent, "Smug Druggles," filmed in Philadelphia last year, has garnered more than a million views.

Randy has two sold-out shows on Saturday night at the Bell House, so the club added an all-ages matinee at 4 p.m. Tickets are $20 at the door and on Eventbrite.

SEAN L. McCARTHY

2

POP & ROCK

SOUND MIND MUSIC FESTIVAL FOR MENTAL HEALTH

May 20 on Jefferson Street between Irving and Wyckoff Avenues, Brooklyn

Musicians often compare their craft to therapy with good reason: The therapeutic benefits of music are well known. But in the face of a national mental health crisis that has been disproportionately felt in the music industry, many have pointed to the need for a stronger infrastructure of care.

The organization Sound Mind Live seeks to combat stigmas around mental health issues and fund services to combat them. This weekend, its flagship festival — held this year, its fifth, in Bushwick — will feature yoga, meditation, sound baths and panels on mental health in marginalized communities. But the main attraction is the music. In contrast to its industrial setting, the festival leans on woodsy folk-rock, with performers including Langhorne Slim, Hiss Golden Messenger and the headliner, Iron & Wine. Attendees will also hear stylized grunge-pop from Pom Pom Squad and soul-flecked hip-hop from Kamauu.

Admission to the festival, which starts at 12:30 p.m., is free. Tickets can be reserved, with the option to make a donation, at soundmindlive.org.

OLIVIA HORN

3

CLASSICAL

COLIN JACOBSEN AND VICKY CHOW

May 21 at Bargemusic, Brooklyn

As part of its Eclectic Series, Bargemusic, a floating concert hall near the Brooklyn Bridge, hosts instrumentalists who place a special focus on contemporary repertoire. The violinist Colin Jacobsen can often be heard in pathbreaking ensembles like the Brooklyn Rider string quartet or the Knights, an orchestra he co-founded. Vicky Chow is a solo recitalist as well as the pianist in the Bang on a Can All-Stars. (Chow was part of a great All-Stars set with Meredith Monk at the Long Play festival earlier this month.)

On Sunday at 4 p.m., Jacobsen and Wang will collaborate on a program of solos and duos. He will take on Jessie Montgomery's Rhapsody No. 2; she will perform Philip Glass's Etude No. 12. Together, the pair will interpret works by Judd Greenstein, Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky, Paula Matthusen and Debussy. Tickets are $35 and are available at bargemusic.org.

SETH COLTER WALLS

4

KIDS

STORY PIRATES LIVE: 'THE AMAZING ADVENTURE'

May 21 at Town Hall, Manhattan

Children usually don't like to part with their treasures. But for 20 years, young people have been gladly giving Story Pirates something especially precious: their ideas.

This company of actors, musicians and writers turns tales conceived by children into comedy sketches and songs. Renowned for its podcast and albums, as well as books and a public television show, the troupe will return to live performance on Sunday at 4 p.m. with "The Amazing Adventure." A benefit for Story Pirates Changemakers, the group's arts education nonprofit, the show will feature numbers like "Cats Sit on Me" (a fan favorite), "The Dancing Cupcake" and "The Wizard Who Could Just Go Poof," all derived from fiction written by contributors ages 6 to 14.

What may be most exciting, however, is that throughout the show, Story Pirates will also take young theatergoers' suggestions for characters, setting and plot and invent a rollicking, multipart improvised creation. Tickets start at $35 and are available through storypirates.com.

LAUREL GRAEBER

5

DANCE

DANCE PARADE AND DANCEFEST

May 20, starting at Sixth Avenue and 17th Street and ending at Tompkins Square Park, Manhattan

New York City is home to a healthy and robust dance ecosystem comprising professional troupes, amateur ensembles, studios of various sizes, and numerous cultural associations. This melting pot of movement will once again be on proud display at the 17th annual Dance Parade, showcasing styles that range from hip-hop and ballet to a plethora of folk and social dance traditions.

Thousands of dancers of all ages, representing over 100 troupes, are expected to participate in this mobile celebration, which starts at noon and will also honor the choreographers Ronald K. Brown and Elizabeth Streb and the D.J. Natasha Diggs as grand marshals. The nearly 1.5-mile route features a grandstand at Astor Plaza where companies can pause to present a sampling of choreography before arriving at Tompkins Square Park, where family-friendly fun on five stages — offering performances, dance lessons and a communal dance party — will take place from 3 to 7 p.m.

The parade and the performances at Tompkins Square are free and open to the public. Grandstand seats start at $40 and are available at danceparade.org.

BRIAN SCHAEFER

This weekend I have . . .

BY MARGARET LYONS

. . . a half-hour, and Skipper is cool, too.

'XO, KITTY' ON NETFLIX



PARK YOUNG-SOL/NETFLIX

This bubbly 10-episode spinoff of the "To All the Boys I've Loved Before" movies turns its attention to Kitty (Anna Cathcart, right), the matchmaking little sister in the saga. Now a junior in high school, she has landed a scholarship to an international academy in Seoul — the same school her late mother attended, and also the school her long-distance Korean boyfriend goes to, so maybe she'll just surprise him. "XO" goes for every rom-com and K-drama shenanigan possible, and the result is an earnest series for viewers still a little too young for "Gossip Girl." If you wish "Wednesday" had been a boppy comedy of errors, try this.

. . . two hours, and I like religious disgrace.

'THE SECRETS OF HILLSONG' FRIDAY AT 10 P.M. ON FX



FX

Carl Lentz (right) rose to fame as the pastor of the New York outpost of the global megachurch Hillsong, baptizing Justin Bieber and exemplifying the Preachers-NSneakers brand of pop Christianity. Then came the affairs, the exposés, a swift canning and a retreat from public life. "Secrets" includes Lentz's first interviews since he was fired in 2020, but the four-episode documentary is most interesting in its second half, when it turns its attention to Hillsong's origins in Australia — where its founder has been accused of covering up child sex abuse. Two episodes run on Friday, and two more next Friday.

. . . a few hours, and I want a drama to wreck me.

'RECTIFY' ON AMC+; SEASON 1 IS ALSO ON AMAZON AND THE ROKU CHANNEL



SUNDANCE

"Rectify" is among the most gorgeous and contemplative dramas of the modern era, though more than a decade after its debut it still feels like an under-the-radar show. Maybe it will become more popular now that the first season is available free on Roku. When Daniel (Aden Young, above) is released from prison after 19 years on death row for a rape and murder he was convicted of as a teen, some members of his family and community are elated; others less so. If your favorite character on "Succession" is Gerri, watch this — J. Smith-Cameron is wonderful as Daniel's mother.

Watching *Sign up for our newsletter:* **nytimes.com/newsletters/watching**

GIA KOURLAS | DANCE REVIEW

Mining a Too-Familiar Contemporary Mode

A reinvented company builds on its repertoire but doesn't enhance it in a return to the Joyce Theater that started in darkness.

A PERFORMANCE by Gibney Company begs a question: What about this reinvented company does the dance world need? In 2023, what does it nourish? I'm still not sure.

Created as a contemporary repertory company — along the lines of Nederlands Dans Theater or Ballet BC in Canada — Gibney gravitates toward work in which emotions are fraught and the bodies containing them, while malleable, are nearly indistinguishable as they slither from one state to the next.

In the company's return on Wednesday to the Joyce Theater in Manhattan, part of the problem had to do with the sleepy lighting. More than watching dancers, it often felt like watching silhouettes of dancers in an all-too-common contemporary dance combination of dated and distraught.

The program started in darkness, but it ended in light. Gibney Dance, led by its founder and artistic director, Gina Gibney, along with company and rehearsal director, Gilbert T Small II, offered three works, including a commission that was decidedly in the twilight camp. In the new dance, "Ghost Town," by Tiffany Tregarthen and David Raymond, who direct the Vancouver-based Out Innerspace Dance Theater, there may have been 13 dancers onstage, but with such moody lighting by James Proudfoot, there could have been 30. Or three? They were hard to pin down.

The premiere, Tregarthen and Raymond's U.S. debut, began with the dancers slowly emerging from an obscured pocket of the stage in something of a wedge formation — similar clusters cropped up again and again during the evening — and shifting from side to side. With their legs bent in deep pliés, they swayed with a rhythmic intensity; at one point, with lowered heads, they twisted their torsos loosely while pulling sharp elbows back. There was a ritualistic side to their uniformity, which bubbled up and dissipated throughout the work — storms of movement that suddenly turned still and ghostly quiet.

The dance, which included the title's song performed by Eddie Miller and His Band — hearing the growl of "*Mmm*" before the half-whispered "Ghost Town" was at once jarring and silly — did conjure an apocalyptic sensation. A line in the program, "acts of self-preservation in extreme climates," hinted at the threats to the world, as the lighting, which cut geometric shapes onto the stage, created the effect of cavelike chambers seemingly trapping dancers behind dusty glass. It had the cover-art look of "The Dark Side of the Moon."

But even as the work morphed into something like a dance party — the cast bounced together, rolling their arms and shaking their hands — "Ghost Town" landed as more of a light installation with dancers inside of it than as a dance. Choreographically, it droned on.


PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREA MOHIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES





Top, members of the Gibney Company in Johan Inger's "Bliss," set to music by Keith Jarrett, at the Joyce Theater on Wednesday. Above, Miriam Gittens and fellow Gibney members in "Sara"; and Jake Tribus, left, and Kevin Pajarillaga in "Ghost Town."

Gibney Company
Through Sunday at the Joyce Theater in Manhattan; joyce.org.

The program also included two works with ties to the Nederlands Dans Theater universe: "Sara," originally created for NDT 2 by Sharon Eyal and Gai Behar, and "Bliss" by the former Nederlands company member and choreographer Johan Inger.

The moody "Sara," set to music by Ori Lichtik, stripped the dancers' identities through costuming. Seven performers wear sleek black unitards; six are in one clump and a single dancer, Miriam Gittens, stands apart. Stillness gives way to bodily quirks — hands anchor onto the ribs for a deep breaths or are held out like paws — which increasingly build in intensity to full-body writhing. In this mannered view of bodies under pressure, Gittens mouths a lyric from "From Off To On," performed by the Knife: "We want control of our bodies."

But do they really? "Sara" reads more as an attempt to be weird rather than as something truly odd. It was originally created in 2013, and its age shows, along with its familiar look — it is derivative of works by Batsheva Dance Company, where Eyal danced for many years. "Bliss," an ensemble work, takes a different course, proposing a sunny reaction to a section from Keith Jarrett's "Köln Concert" (1975).

As for Inger's dance? It never measures up to the sweeping virtuosity of the music. The cast, dressed as if attending a high school dance in an unnamed, friendlier era, pair off in duets, shifting partners with the quick grab of a hand. Dancers walk, they run; a cartwheel turns into a roll.

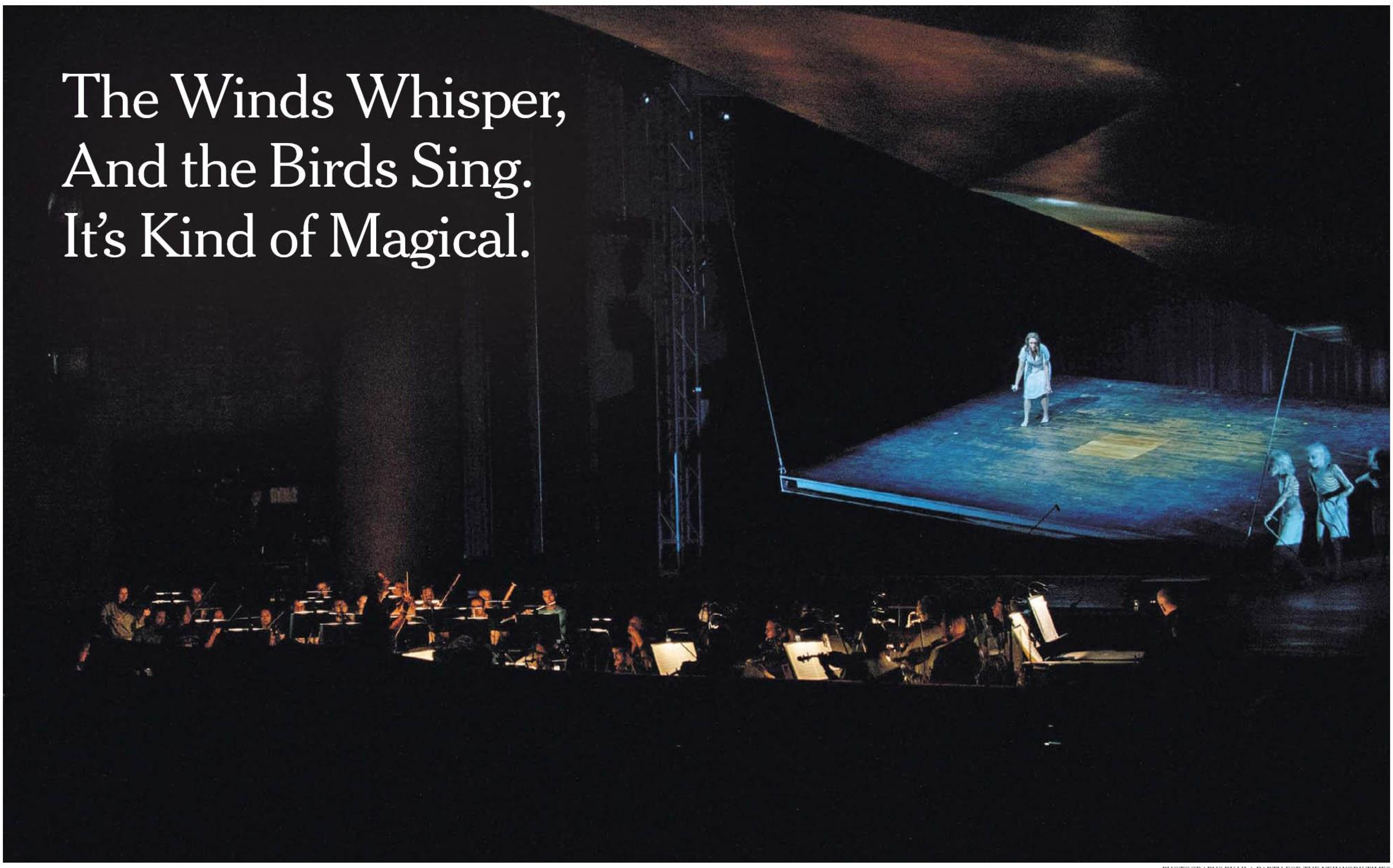
Eleni Loving stands in a wide plié softly rolling her hips when Eddieomar Gonzalez-Castillo seizes his opportunity and slips underneath her legs, assuming her position to a moan from Jarrett, whose trance-like utterances are audible throughout "Bliss." While Jarrett hits the piano keys with power and urgency, the Gibney cast responds with a light touch, as if the notes were as soft as gauze.

Predictably, they came together in the end, swooping across the stage in low kicks that turned feverish until one dancer was left standing alone. After realizing his plight, he shrugged and ran off, too. Certainly the title was ambitious, but "Bliss" had a missing ingredient: euphoria.





The Winds Whisper, And the Birds Sing. It's Kind of Magical.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LILA BARTH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

and has been presented around Europe. (It replaces the 19-year-old Julie Taymor production at the Met; her abridged, English-language version for families remains in the repertory.) A distinctive trait of McBurney's "Zauberflöte" is the importance of the sonic environment.

"For a forest scene I have five or six bird tracks that I can send out, a running brook that I'm going to put in a speaker in the far right side of the stage, two tracks of wind blowing in trees," Matthieu Maurice, a sound designer, said at a recent rehearsal.

The singers are amplified through body microphones, though only for the spoken sections — plentiful in "Zauberflöte," which is a singspiel, a numbers show with dialogue between arias. The mics are turned off for the sung parts, requiring constant adjustments by two sound mixers.

"There's so much more I can do with the dialogue with a mic," said the soprano Erin Morley, who plays the pure-hearted princess Pamina. "I can face upstage, I can whisper something. I'm sure there will be some purists out there who will hate this, but the important thing is that we are not singing with mics."

Nathalie Stutzmann, this production's conductor, was also on board. "In a house as big as this one, it is obvious to me that we need to use modern technology," she said. "The Met is huge. It's a lack of intelligence not to adapt to a space. It's normal to help the singers fill the space when they are speaking. It's also important that the volume of the spoken parts match the volume of the sung parts in an opera like this one, otherwise it feels like two different works."

Amplification also allows the integration of a live foley artist, Ruth Sullivan, who operates out of a self-contained space, visible stage left, that looks like a zany inventor's laboratory. "Her relationship with the actors is a musical one, essentially," McBurney said of Sullivan. "They know the sounds she is going to make, and so it is a dance in the same way Nathalie Stutzmann is dancing with the singers, trying to make the cellos and the voices work together."

Stutzmann works as closely with Maurice as she does with the musicians and singers. (The associate sound designer, he has been fulfilling Gareth Fry's original vision for the past eight years, while adding flourishes of his own, including the ringtone.) The sound effects are indicated on the sheet music, so she knows exactly what to expect and when.

Adding to the increased interconnection among the opera's moving parts, the pit is almost level with the stage.

"We decided, 'Let's raise the orchestra, let's make people aware of the players,'" said Michael Levine, the set designer. "Because we're so used to the players being hidden, and they weren't in the 18th century."

During the spoken sections at rehearsal, players in the orchestra turned toward the stage like flowers to the sun. They could watch the action for a change.

"There's nothing more boring than being an orchestra musician and being in the back of a cave with no idea of what's happening on the stage," Stutzmann said. "Can you imagine spending three or four hours, five for Wagner, at the bottom of a pit and have no idea what's happening above you?" Not only can the musicians see this "Zauberflöte"; some also become part of the action.



Above, the soprano Erin Morley, as Pamina, rehearsing with the orchestra, which is raised almost to the level of the stage. Below, the director Simon McBurney at the Met. "The use of sound creates a magical world," he says, "and yet at the heart of 'The Magic Flute' are real human concerns."

'For a forest scene I have five or six bird tracks that I can send out, a running brook that I'm going to put in a speaker in the far right side of the stage.'

MATTHIEU MAURICE
A SOUND DESIGNER FOR THE PRODUCTION

Being positioned higher creates a challenge, though. "We have to be careful not to cover up the singers," Stutzmann said. "The sound balance is changed because we're up and above, so we're louder. You have to be vigilant while avoiding being bland."

Much of the production's visuals are also created in plain view. The artist Blake Habermann contributes drawings and ingenious effects — watch how he renders a starry sky — to live projections. "I show all my tricks and then they become doubly magical," McBurney said with an impish grin.

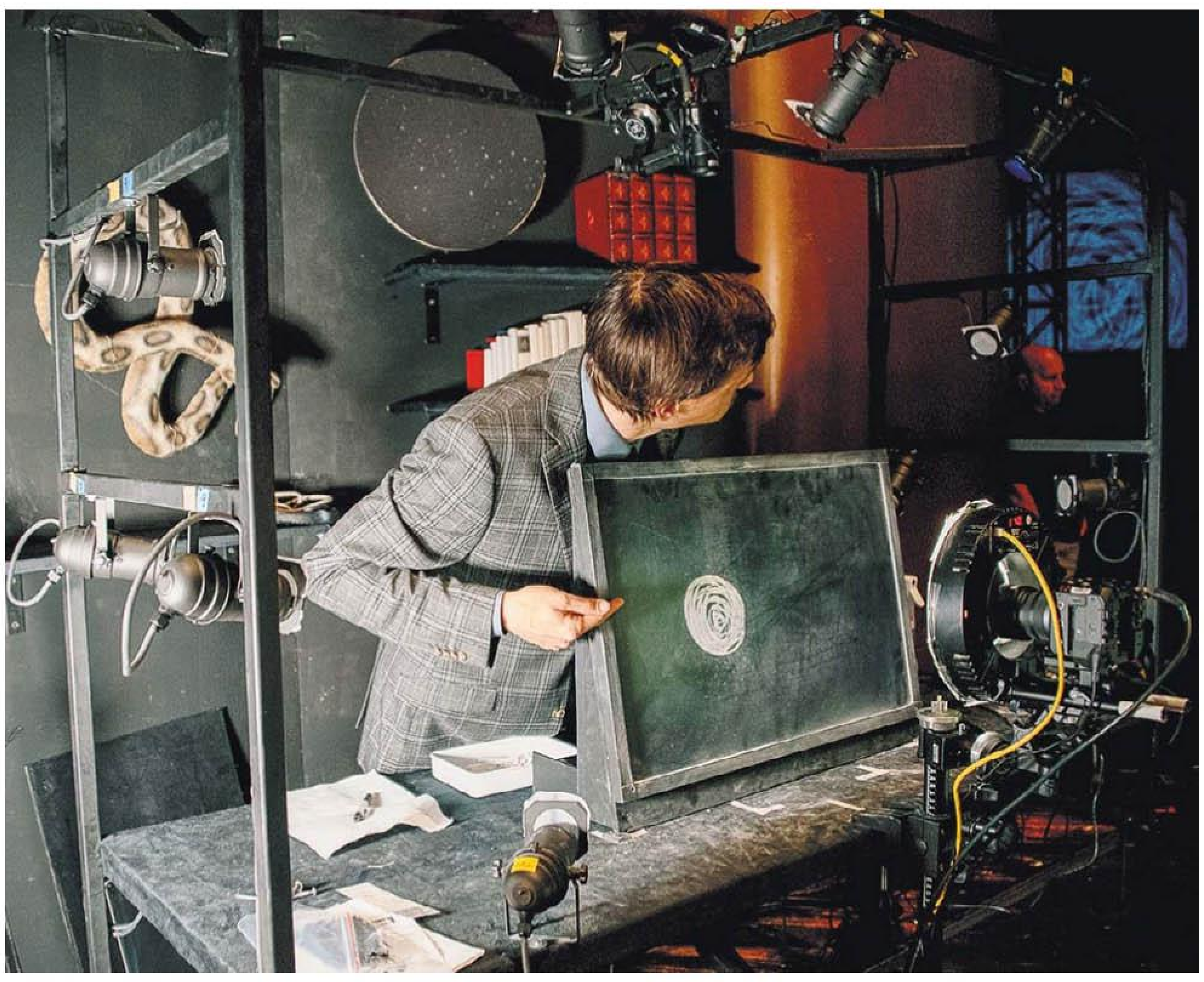
For Levine, making the entire house part of one organism reminds everybody that the artificiality and evanescence of the art form constitute its strength. "What we wanted to do is to bring the audience into the fallibility of theater," he said. "Things are being made before your eyes, and it's live, and it's not going to happen again. And the people that are constructing it are here with you in the same room, and we're all doing it together."

If the projections are the modern equivalent of the magic lanterns developed in the 17th century, McBurney and Levine also came up with a contemporary version of a magic carpet: a central square platform that can transport the characters, but that also suggests the instability they experience. It can go up and down, and it can be inclined as various angles; the singers can scamper on top or scurry below. "It is much more secure when you're on it," Morley said. "From afar, it looks terrifying." Laughing, she allowed that "when we go underneath the platform, there were a few moments in rehearsal when I said, 'You want me to do *what*?'"

Some modern directors have been criticized for overemphasizing an opera's staging over its music, and forcing interpretations that depart from the familiar. But McBurney's North Star remains the music, and trying to stay faithful to what it meant for its creator.

"I think that for Mozart, if you can make music so beautiful, people will come out changed," he said. "We can debate whether he was right or not well, but it's called 'The Magic Flute.' The flute changes the way that people behave."

Mozart, he added, had confidence in his music: "He knew that it could move people in a way that might alter their lives."





Above left, the artist Blake Habermann, who contributes drawings and ingenious effects to live projections. Above right, Ruth Sullivan, a live foley artist who operates out of a self-contained space visible at stage left.

The struggle to be OK inspires Kassa Overall's genre-crossing work, including his new album.

Drummer Makes Pressure His Ally

By MARCUS J. MOORE



MICHAEL TYRONE DELANEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Kassa Overall feels a kinship with "artists that you could tell were special, but also couldn't really handle the pressure."

On a cloudy afternoon, the drummer Kassa Overall strolled past his first New York City apartment, a second-floor room in a Fort Greene brownstone. He had moved to Brooklyn after graduating from Oberlin in 2006 to play in the local jazz scene while improving his chops as a beatmaker. To help him make ends meet he got a gig through the drummer Billy Hart, playing the djembe for a physical therapy dance class at a nursing home in Harlem.

"So I came into the game with a consistent paying thing, low rent, and it was just like, 'Damn, I'm here,'" Overall, 40, said as he toured his old neighborhood in March. "So I just stayed."

Fast-forward to 2020: Overall had built himself into a noted musician here and abroad, with a multifaceted sound synthesizing jazz, rap and R&B, and an album called "I Think I'm Good" — on the British tastemaker Gilles Peterson's Brownswood Recordings label — poised to push him into wider circles. Or so he thought. "It really felt like this was about to pop," Overall recalled. "We did Japan, then we did the West Coast, and we were selling out merch every show."

But the pandemic shut down the possibility of further touring. Overall flew back to his native Seattle and wondered what was next. "I went from being a touring musician and always having extra income to barely having enough," he said over lunch, opening up about his hard times without any apprehension. "I felt like I wasn't as successful as it felt like I was on the internet."

The anguish led him to start work on a new album, "Animals," out next Friday, about the struggles of surviving as an entertainer, and how the pressure to stand out can push an artist too far. "I'm one of those people that's like, I had mental illness stuff back in the day, and I have a sensitivity," he explained. "I can't just walk through the world normal. I got to do a lot of [expletive] to keep my train on the track."

> 'If he keeps going the way he's going, he's going to be a major star.'
>
> *BILLY HART*
> *KASSA OVERALL'S MENTOR AND FORMER PROFESSOR*

Overall had challenges throughout college, while he was studying jazz performance; he couldn't sleep and had bouts of what he called "super high energy." Then he'd be depressed for days. "I remember even telling my mom one day, 'I think I'm bipolar,'" he said, recalling a moment when he was in high school. "I had this period where I was getting real isolated." He described a manic episode where he began seeing and hearing things that weren't there. "I started seeing stuff on me."

"I Think I'm Good" unpacked the experience of living with bipolar disorder through scant electroacoustic backing tracks and heavily modulated vocals. "Animals" takes a different approach, inspired by Overall's feeling of kinship with unconventional musicians like Ol' Dirty Bastard, Kurt Cobain and Jimi Hendrix — "artists that you could tell were special, but also couldn't really handle the pressure," he said.

The album's vigorous jazz, rap and soul blends live instruments with electronic drum tracks. Its formidable roster of collaborators includes the rappers Danny Brown, Lil B and Ish of Shabazz Palaces; the vocalists Nick Hakim and Laura Mvula; and the jazz instrumentalists Theo Croker and Vijay Iyer. "The Lava Is Calm" features chilling piano; "Maybe We Can Stay" spotlights sweeping strings and flutes darting across a bouncy backbeat.

"It feels like you're in a zoo — you can't go full animal, you know?" Overall said. "I was feeling like, within this machine and within this whole organism, I can see within myself, I'm doing everything I can to handle it, and I can barely handle it. So think about somebody who's not doing anything to handle it. How are they going to get through all this?"

Overall's childhood in Seattle was filled with music and life lessons from his free-spirited parents. (His mother worked for the local PBS station, and his father did odd jobs and stayed at home with the children.) "Everybody else had Kraft Singles and Coca-Cola," he quipped, "we had soy milk and tofu."

He was a quick study who learned how to play drums as a young child, exploring a living room full of instruments that his father collected. There was a piano, saxophones, trumpets, clarinets, a broken violin, a four-track recorder and a beat machine that he said no one knew how to use. But Overall learned how to manipulate the electronic equipment; by fourth grade, he and his older brother, Carlos, started playing jazz songs like "Autumn Leaves" and "A Night in Tunisia."

"I'm coming home with a lot of dollar bills and ironing them," he remembered of their early performances. "And my dad was super hands-on with us. He would take us to the spot and set up, we'd find a corner and make bread."

Overall grew up listening to a wide array of artists — John Coltrane and Ravi Shankar, Public Enemy and DJ Quik — which gave him a natural feel for all kinds of sounds. A turning point in his relationship to music came when he was a sophomore in high school and landed a $9-an-hour job sweeping peanut shells and taking out trash at the Major League Baseball stadium in Seattle. After he and some friends were fired for smoking marijuana, he had a realization.

"Wait a minute. I'm doing jazz gigs, getting a $100 a night, $150, sometimes $200 on a good gig," Overall remembered thinking. "So I could either level this up or I could get better at sweeping peanuts and stuff. And I haven't had a real job since then."

Hart, a mentor and one of Overall's Oberlin professors, was taken by his student's assertiveness. "I knew he had a certain amount of self-confidence that was obvious when he got there," said Hart, who is also a noted Herbie Hancock and McCoy Tyner collaborator. "As far as I'm concerned, Kassa is a jazz musician who has excelled in the pop field," he added. "He's found a unique direction all his own. If he keeps going the way he's going, he's going to be a major star."

Peterson, the Brownswood Recordings founder, was one of Overall's early supporters, and he said he was struck by Overall's curiosity for sounds outside jazz. "He's kind of incorporated all these elements and made something fresh and new, but with all the aspects of traditional music," he said. "He has a really great sense of being able to push the audience to a point where they can't take anymore before bringing the beat back in — it's brave."

Speaking and writing candidly about his own struggles requires its own bravery, but Overall says the new album isn't simply about one person's trials.

"We're all aspiring to reach a higher place, and we're all aspiring to do better," he said. "But also have empathy for those who don't. Because I know how hard it is. I know how hard it is to just do OK. There's a large percentage of us that are not going to do OK. So maybe those are the people we consider animals. But it could have been you, could have been me. May have been me in the past life, or in the next life."

JEOPARDY! CLUE OF THE DAY

THE U.S.A.

PEOPLE GOING NORTH ON THIS ROUTE SAY THEY'RE TRAVELING "GAME," AN ACRONYM REGARDING THEIR BEGINNING & ENDING POINTS

FOR THE CORRECT RESPONSE, WATCH JEOPARDY! TONIGHT OR LOOK IN THIS SPACE MONDAY IN THE TIMES.

Yesterday's Response: WHAT IS "WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE"?

Watch JEOPARDY! 7 p.m. on Channel 7

The New York Times

Open the app. Open the world.

The New York Times app. Download now.

THEATER DIRECTORY
Your daily guide to theater

BROADWAY

PETER PAN GOES WRONG

ON BROADWAY THRU JULY 9 ONLY!

"KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS WITH LAUGHTER!" - The New York Times

"THIS FARCE DESERVES TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. A TOTAL BLAST!" - Chris Jones, Chicago Tribune

PETER PAN GOES WRONG
DIRECT FROM LONDON
Featuring The Original Mischief Company

Today at 8, Sat at 2 & 8, Sun at 2 & 7

Telecharge.com or 212.239.6200
PanGoesWrongBway.com
Groups (10+): 1-800-BROADWAY x2
Barrymore Theatre (+), 243 W. 47th St.

THIS SIGN (+) WHEN FOLLOWING THE NAME OF A THEATER, INDICATES THAT A SHOW IS EQUIPPED WITH AN INFRARED ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICE.

SIX

WINNER OF 23 AWARDS
Including the
2022 TONY AWARD FOR BEST ORIGINAL SCORE

"A POP-ROCK AVALANCHE!" - New York Magazine

BROADWAY'S "EUPHORIC CELEBRATION!" - Entertainment Weekly

The New York Times Critic's Pick

SIX

Written by 2022 Tony Award Winners
TOBY MARLOW & LUCY MOSS

Today at 8
Sat at 3 & 8, Sun at 2 & 7

SixOnBroadway.com
Groups (10+): 1-800-BROADWAY x2
Lena Horne Theatre (+), 256 W. 47 St

LIMITED ENGAGEMENTS

ASI WIND'S INNER CIRCLE

NEW YORK TIMES CRITIC'S PICK

"ASTONISHING! ONE OF THE FINEST PRACTITIONERS OF CLOSE-UP MAGIC WORKING TODAY. A MASTER AT THE TOP OF HIS GAME." -THE NEW YORK TIMES

"#1 MAGIC SHOW IN NYC!" -TIME OUT NY

"DAZZLING AND ASTONISHING!" -THE NEW YORKER

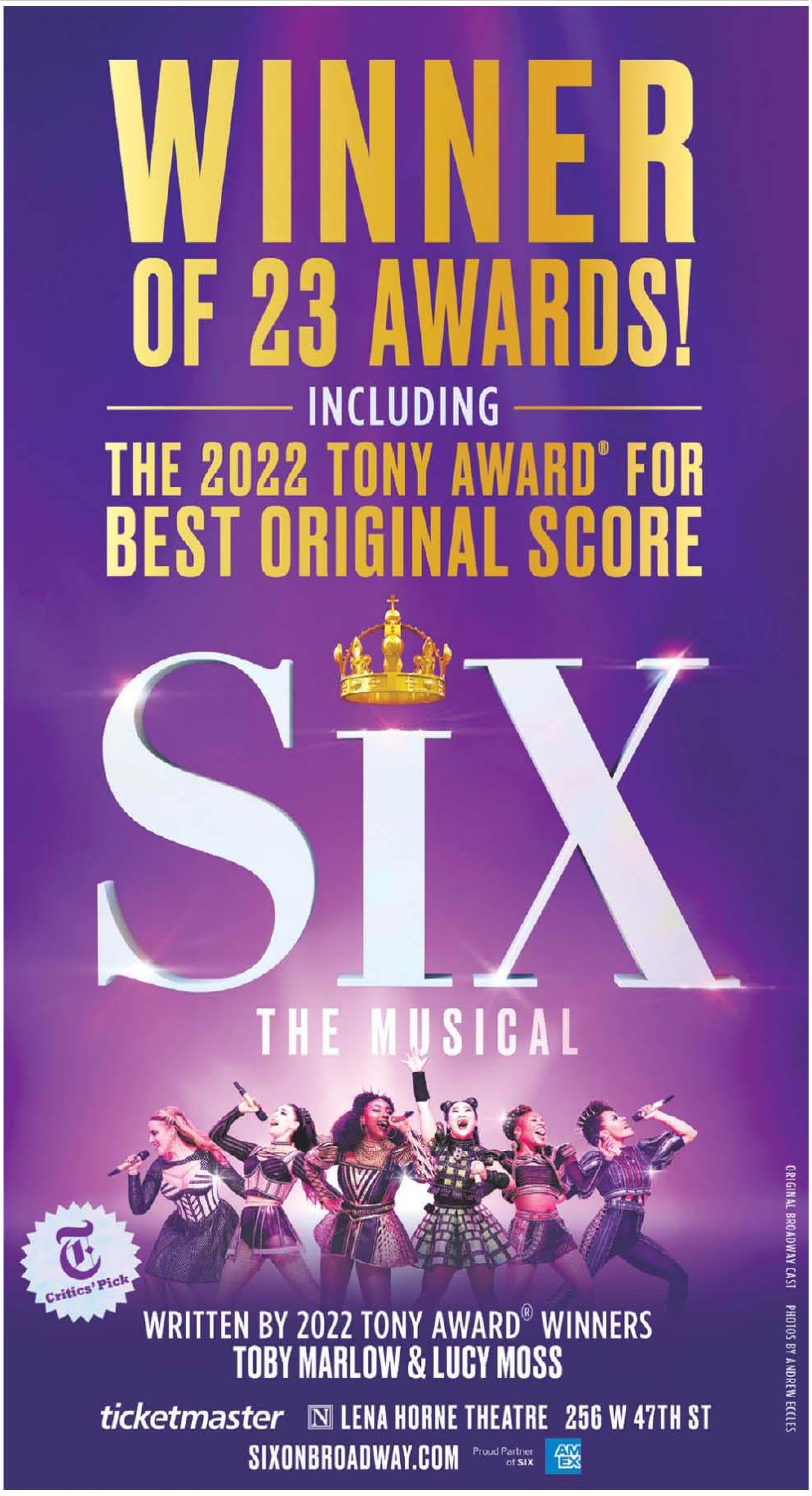
David Blaine Presents
ASI WIND'S INNER CIRCLE
www.AsiWind.com
Judson Theatre
243 Thompson Street
(Across from Washington Square Park)
Now extended through September 3

Shop The Times.

nytimes.com/store



Store



Movies

MANOHLA DARGIS | FILM REVIEW



MAGNOLIA PICTURES

A Man Tends His Garden, With Help

He is Paul Schrader's latest hero searching for grace in a brutal world by way of women.

PART OF THE KICK of "Master Gardener" is that the writer-director Paul Schrader manages to pull off this improbable movie. It shouldn't work and, even after seeing it twice, I don't think it entirely does, which makes it only more fascinating and strengthens its power. There's much to admire about the movie's tense dreaminess, its pulpy undertow and severe elegance, as well as the astonishing, awkward sincerity with which Schrader hurtles headlong at questions of love, hate, race and redemption in an unforgiving world.

As has been the case in many of Schrader's stories, this one centers on a man who's of this world and apart. That character — "God's lonely man," as he's called in "Taxi Driver," which Schrader wrote — has appeared repeatedly in his filmography. That lonely man is here again, risen once more in "Master Gardener" but now named Narvel Roth and played like a clenched fist by Joel Edgerton. Stoic, driven and watchful, Narvel works as the chief horticulturist for Gracewood Gardens, a cultivated wonderland someplace in the American South with fastidiously organized plantings and a shuddering chill in the air.

"Master Gardener" is the third installment in what Schrader has described as an accidental trilogy that began with his 2018 drama "First Reformed," about a minister (Ethan Hawke) having a crisis in faith, and which continued three years later with "The Card Counter," about a gambler (Oscar Isaac) with a brutal military past. In all three movies, a solitary, soul-weary man in crisis — who's invariably seen alone in a room writing in a journal he shares in voice-over — undergoes a kind of transfiguration. Each man meets a woman who greatly moves him, and each experiences purgative violence (oblique and disturbingly literal), and through both, achieves grace or something like it.

Narvel doesn't at first seem in crisis. The garden he tends is owned by Norma Haverhill, a vain, imperious doyenne played with terrifying hauteur by Sigourney Weaver.

The director's female characters take up space and you remember them.

Everyone in Norma's employ calls her Mrs. Haverhill, which with her eerie mansion — a plantation house — brings to mind a more put-together Southern Miss Havisham. The name Norma, on the other hand, seems an obvious cineaste nod to Norma Desmond, another wealthy woman rattling around inside the mausoleum that she's made of her life. Unlike Desmond's garden, though, Norma's has not gone to seed, to borrow Schrader's controlling metaphor, partly because Narvel is nothing if not an obliging worker.

Norma's and Narvel's ordered lives are disturbed by the arrival of her biracial grandniece, Maya (Quintessa Swindell), who has come to apprentice at the garden. Maya has a troubled back-story, as beautiful young women sometimes do in movies, a history that Norma relates to Narvel with the detached cool of one discussing inconvenient weather. Norma seems generally more emotionally invested in her garden, which she discourses on while strolling about in pearls and a cream-colored skirt and blouse, a flower-patterned sweater draped over her shoulders. The sweater's splashes of pink echo the richer-hued rose sweater that Maya wears in a childhood photo.

There are more splashes of pink in the shirt Maya is wearing when she arrives at Gracewood, which creates a sense of continuity between her and Norma that lingers, complicating the triangle that develops as things begin to fall apart, as they must. Schrader can surprise you, but violence is one of his signatures, and a sense of unease settles into the story almost as soon as Maya arrives, a disturbance that Schrader stokes with references to past trauma, spooky flashbacks, prowling camerawork and a distinctly fashy haircut. Soon, Narvel and Maya are shoulder to shoulder, a wildly complicated union that frays their ties with Norma and pushes the movie to its breaking point.

Despite their different stories and characters, the movies in Schrader's latest trilogy are tonally, thematically and visually similar, more like chapters in the same book than distinct volumes. (He has previously referred to "Taxi Driver" and two movies he directed, "American Gigolo" and "Light Sleeper," as a trilogy.) They're handsome, unfussy and spare, with somber palettes flecked with occasional shocks of vibrant color, like the ravishing flowers in Norma's garden. (The cinematographer Alexander Dynan shot all three movies.) When the man is writing in his room, it often feels as though he's imprisoned or even entombed — his room is his head and vice versa — and he needs a way out.

Joel Edgerton and Quintessa Swindell in "Master Gardener," the third in a trilogy directed by Paul Schrader.

Master Gardener
CRITIC'S PICK
Rated R for gun and other violence. Running time: 1 hour 51 minutes. In theaters.

Saving men has long been a woman's job in the movies, which would be easier to grouse about if Schrader's female characters were dull. His women aren't always as thoughtfully developed as his men, but they're vivid, take up space and you remember them. They feel real, not like props, even when — as with the bookending presence of Norma and Maya — they are supporting the man in crisis.

Schrader has written some juicy material for the two female roles here, and when Norma casually promenades around the garden, describing it as "four generations of curated botany, horticulture and display," it's hard not to flash on the longer, unspoken history of the annihilating racial violence that haunts this eerie place.

Swindell is very good and displays a mesmerizing stillness, but this is a near-impossible role. The character is carrying a lot of weight, personal as well as political. There are no grand speeches here on race and reconciliation or reassuring appeals to the audience's conscience; Schrader is intensely focused more on the soul-sickness of one man than that of the nation.

Yet the sincerity of Schrader's filmmaking and his insistence on the possibility of redemption for the irredeemable is deeply affecting. That's never truer than when Maya and Narvel drive off into the night and find their way lit by an effusion of gloriously multihued flowers, blooms that took root long ago in haunted ground.

JEANNETTE CATSOULIS | FILM REVIEW

A Racy Rom-Com Takes Dark Twists

A cautionary tale on firing your longtime dominatrix.



NEON

Margaret Qualley and Christopher Abbott star in "Sanctuary," a dark comedic thriller set in a plush hotel suite.

Sanctuary
CRITIC'S PICK
Rated R for nasty talk and naughty behavior. Running time: 1 hour 36 minutes. In theaters.

IF YOU'RE SOMEONE who regularly bemoans the dearth of movies for adults, then take heart: "Sanctuary" is here for you. Shot almost entirely in a single location and in just 18 days, Zachary Wigon's supremely confident second feature (after "The Heart Machine" in 2014) is a jet-black romantic comedy hidden inside a twisty psychosexual thriller. Or maybe it's the other way around.

It scarcely matters. The writing (by Micah Bloomberg, a creator of the 2018-20 TV series "Homecoming") is so sharp, the acting so agile and the cinematography (by Ludovica Isidori) so inventive that what could have been a stuffy experiment in lockdown filmmaking is instead a vividly involving battle of wills.

On one side we have Hal (Christopher Abbott), the presumptive heir to his recently deceased father's chain of luxury hotels. On the other is Rebecca (Margaret Qualley), a brisk beauty who arrives at Hal's plush hotel suite, pulls out a sheaf of papers, and proceeds to ostensibly review his suitability to take over as C.E.O.

But something is off; and as Rebecca's questions grow increasingly inappropriate — and Hal's responses appear blatantly untruthful — it's revealed that she's his longtime dominatrix, playing her part in a well-worn scenario. This time, though, Rebecca is improvising on Hal's meticulously prewritten script, and his displeasure is only the first point of friction in a dizzying series of power plays that swing from sexual to financial and, finally, emotional. Alongside, Isidori's cheeky camera mimics the pair's volatile maneuverings, swooping and flipping through 180 degrees as it tests the limitations of what is essentially a two-character play, transforming it into something that's often thrillingly cinematic.

Unfolding over one fraught night, "Sanctuary" dances on the border between fantasy and reality. Hal, a soft-shell weakling who's nonetheless steeled by entitlement, wants to begin his new life as "a person who wins." As such, he feels the services of a sex worker are surplus to requirements. As he moves to end his relationship with Rebecca, his actions — providing a lavish dinner and the gift of an expensive watch — insultingly mimic the tropes of a retirement ceremony. He's about to find out, though, that this employee will not be pensioned off so easily.

Both actors are excellent, but Qualley is chameleonic in a role that requires her to slide seamlessly from playful to stern, cunning to confrontational, penitent to downright scary. At times, as when Hal erupts with unexpected violence, her face freezes and we can almost see her contriving ways to regain control of a suddenly dangerous situation. If she's to succeed, she'll need more than a talent for debasement and humiliation.

Sexual but not sexy, "Sanctuary" is fantastically dynamic and emphatically theatrical. The ending feels too smoothly settled, but it at least prods Hal and Rebecca to answer the film's central question: Where does role-playing end and real life begin?

FILM REVIEWS


KINO LORBER

For Leonor Varela's character in "The Cow Who Sang a Song Into the Future," returning to the family farm has its complications.

The Cow Who Sang A Song Into the Future

Not rated. In Spanish, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 38 minutes. In theaters.

CRITIC'S PICK

The final 20 minutes or so of "The Cow Who Sang a Song Into the Future," the slow-burning parable from the writer-director Francisca Alegría, are almost entirely wordless. In its last act, the film follows the members of a fractured family as they wander about, cast in different directions and undone by recent oddities on their dairy farm.

The power of Alegría's feature debut is found not in dialogue or explication, but in the lyrical, magical realist qualities of folklore: disappointed mothers and fathers, sacred animals and cursed rivers, love and forgiveness.

At the film's start, a woman (Mía Maestro) bubbles up from the surface of the water, landing on a riverbank filled with dead fish. In a store, an old man (Alfredo Castro) collapses at the sight of her. Miraculously alive and not having aged a day, she appears to be Magdalena, the man's wife who mysteriously drowned herself decades earlier, leaving him and his two children behind. Soon after, the man's daughter, Cecilia (Leonor Varela) returns to the family farm to care for her shaken father. Cecilia has her hangups about her mother's death and her own teenage child's transgender identity.

As Magdalena wanders back to the farm, the family begins to reckon with a complicated past, and the cows, which she had always loved but that suffer from the realities of factory farming, begin acting strangely. Through these animals, the film becomes an allegorical prayer — an elegy for human failures toward one another and the living world, and an incantation for a return and reversal of sorts.

While often elliptical, Alegría's directing is patient, a good quality for a movie that could have fallen prey to sanctimony. In this film, the purest truth can be seen in the eyes of its cows — the mournful gaze of the mothers, and the tragically innocent look of the calves that have been torn from them.

BRANDON YU

The Night of the 12th

Not rated. In French with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 55 minutes. In theaters.

CRITIC'S PICK

Police procedurals don't usually start by saying that the crime at hand will not be solved. But Dominik Moll's "The Night of the 12th" does just that, and then watches a French investigator labor away at a murder case before reluctantly abandoning it. This is a refreshingly grounded, deceptively plain picture of crime-fighting as a grind of false leads, workplace fatigue and no closure.

Walking home late from a party, Clara, a joyful teenager (Lula Cotton Frapier), is doused in fuel by a hooded stranger and set on fire. Yohan (Bastien Bouillon), an extremely square new leader of a judicial police unit, questions a series of sketchy and dismissive guys who Clara may have been involved with, turning up no definitive answers. Clara's friend offers one answer that neatly sums up the misogyny of being subject to such random brutality: It was because she was a girl.

Likely suspects emerge, then fall away; phone call audio is analyzed to no avail. After a few years, a judge takes interest in the cold case, funding new surveillance. But even though the inexpressive Yohan does seem like one of the good guys, he's going in circles, and can't even help his burned-out partner, Marceau (Bouli Lanners).

Despite all the best intentions, "cracking a case" just doesn't happen sometimes, and the movie (based on a nonfiction book by Pauline Guéna) matter-of-factly avoids the magical thinking we've absorbed from decades of macho crime-fighting yarns. Instead, it's a matter of coping with long-term, slow-motion frustrations and failure — something sadly closer to a lot of common experience than save-the-day heroism.

NICOLAS RAPOLD


FILM MOVEMENT

Bastien Bouillon, left, and Bouli Lanners in "The Night of the 12th."

Queenmaker: The Making of an It Girl

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 27 minutes. On Hulu.

This frequently startling documentary begins with some fairly banal observations about the nature of a contemporary sickness. In jaded tones, a female voice-over says, "After years of worshiping monarchs and majesty, we now worship the celebrity."

What follows for the next 20 minutes or so of "Queenmaker: The Making of an It Girl" constitutes a fast-paced account of the ascendancy of famous-for-being-famous rich kids — the Hilton sisters, the Miller sisters, Amanda Hearst, Olivia Palermo, Casey Johnson. The publicist Kelly Cutrone, describing New York nightlife in the late '90s and early aughts, remembers, "People were doing blow and they were hanging out and they were making the world go 'round." 'Twas ever thus, one supposes.

But the filmmaker Zackary Drucker's narrative soon alights on the blogs that covered the social whirl, then one in particular: Park Avenue Peerage, at the time a kinder, gentler alternative to Socialite Rank and Gawker and one especially besotted with Tinsley Mortimer. The creator of Peerage is the true center of this documentary and, not to be glib, but their story is a doozy.

The blog's origins were nowhere near Park Avenue. James Kurisunkal, the son of South Asian immigrants, started working on it from his student residence at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He was fascinated by Mortimer and her world while dwelling on the idea that he was "not attractive, not skinny" and not white. When New York magazine offered him a job in the city, the stage was set for catastrophe.

And his downfall was dramatic. Our culture likes to talk about people reinventing themselves. If you don't already know this story (heartbreak, drug addiction, extreme weight loss, bankruptcy, gender transition) the sleight of hand Drucker uses — which includes a circle back to the jaded voice at the movie's beginning — delivers its particulars with a wallop. And the finale is as compassionate as it is sad and unnerving.

GLENN KENNY

Come Out Fighting

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 25 minutes. In theaters and available on demand.


SCREEN MEDIA FILMS

Kellan Lutz, left, and Hiram A. Murray in "Come Out Fighting."

The microbudget war movie "Come Out Fighting" is so conspicuously cheap looking that it could be initially mistaken for one of the direct-to-video mockbusters made by the somewhat infamous indie studio the Asylum — those thrifty, semi-plagiaristic exploitation flicks like "Ardennes Fury" or "Operation Dunkirk," which have little to recommend them besides their zany, so-bad-it's-almost-good zeal. But while it has a blatant shoestring sheen, "Come Out Fighting" isn't arch or irony-laden; in fact, the tone is quite serious, albeit also seriously clichéd. Between the dogfights, ambushes, minefield maneuvers and flamethrower attacks — all realized with cut-rate visual effects — the film is contemplative and somber, pensively reflecting on such steadfast wartime themes as determination, valor and courage among men. Perhaps needless to say, the movie features no women.

It features no surprises, either, telling a familiar story about a squad of stouthearted soldiers in World War II endeavoring to rescue their commanding officer after he is trapped behind enemy lines. The writer-director Steven Luke, who has several of these low-budget war movies under his belt, leans hard on the conventions of the genre and borrows heavily from "Saving Private Ryan." His writing is thin and tends toward platitudes, with characters spouting wisdom like "the cards have to fall where they fall."

Both Luke and his cast — especially Hiram A. Murray as the indomitable Lieutenant Hayes and Dolph Lundgren as the experienced and kindly Major Anderson — seem gamely committed to the material, managing at times to muster a genuine sense of gravity. This impression of effort on the part of all involved makes "Come Out Fighting" strangely likable even when it's bad. And it is often bad.

CALUM MARSH

Moon Garden

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 33 minutes. In theaters.


OSCILLOSCOPE

Haven Lee Harris in "Moon Garden," a film by Ryan Stevens Harris.

"Moon Garden" is a nightmare tour through a small child's psyche that the filmmaker Ryan Stevens Harris could have staged as an escape room, or a haunted house, or a themed restaurant where his creepy puppets and bizarro performers would chatter their teeth at you while smashing plates. It feels as though he chose to make a movie simply because that's the handiest way to get his ghastly creations seen.

Harris seems bored by his film's opening sequence, a chintzy melodrama about a girl named Emma (his own daughter Haven Lee Harris, just 4-years-old when she started the project) and her miserable parents (Brionne Davis and Augie Duke). Only after Emma's circumstances get worse — the poor dear is knocked comatose — do things onscreen improve.

Heroines have been tumbling into their own subconscious since "The Wizard of Oz" and "Alice in Wonderland." Rarely are the children this young — and their adventures this dark. The moppet charges through all sorts of muck with kittenish courage as Harris unleashes an army of unnerving practical effects: stop-motion, tear-gobbling monsters, disconcerting reversed footage, time lapses of rotting fruit, skin-crawling sound design. Initially, we're repelled by the '90s grunge video aesthetics. Later, we admire the power in these visceral expressions of traumas Emma will someday tell her therapist.

As the tot struggles to sweep up the wreckage of a rampaging bride and groom, we sense she already knows she's the family fixer. The film doesn't need three lullaby covers of the Badfinger ballad "Without You" when it has the poetry of Harris's emotional insights, particularly the line: "I wish I had learned that the world was bigger than how I felt."

AMY NICHOLSON

Giving Birth To a Butterfly

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 17 minutes. On Fandor.

"Giving Birth to a Butterfly," Theodore Schaefer's beautifully peculiar debut feature, strikes a balance between tender and vaguely unsettling, an effect similarly achieved by the work of David Lynch. I hate to use "Lynchian," a term frequently — and slovenly — invoked for films with a merely surrealist bent. But Schaefer's film, also steeped in a distinctly American nostalgia, more than deserves the description.

In this uncanny indie, we're plunged into an American no-place, where a suburban father, Daryl (Paul Sparks), plans to open a diner despite not having any money; and where a former actress named Monica (Constance Shulman, channeling Norma Desmond in "Sunset Boulevard") prepares for a big interview that will never happen. Opposite these tragic figures is Daryl's wife, Diane (Annie Parisse), and Monica's daughter Marlene (Gus Birney) — two women worn down by the follies of their loved ones.

Marlene is pregnant, and her boyfriend Drew (Owen Campbell) — Diane's son — wants to raise the baby though he's not the biological father. Diane, a pharmacist, bristles at the idea. Daryl's restaurant scheme has the couple pinching pennies, and worse, Diane soon discovers that her bank account has been drained by online scammers. She was duped, she admits to Marlene, led astray by the kind of optimism that blinds.

The two women track down the identity thief — a GPS point on Diane's computer flashes in the middle of a perfectly spiral road — and head to the ominous location.

They bond during the drive over, though their heady dialogue works only somewhat. Paradoxically, it leaves little room for ambiguity amid images, captured on lush 16-millimeter film by the cinematographer Matt Clegg, that lovingly summon the strangeness of everyday life (pet fish, spilled fruit and more than one pair of twins). The mannered, intentionally stilted performances give the drama a stagey feel, which vibes with the film's ethereal aesthetics. But the forced profundity of the "Butterfly" script undermines the film's enthralling sense of atmosphere, which drips with melancholy, menace and wonder.

BEATRICE LOAYZA

Butterfly Vision

Not rated. In Ukrainian, English and Russian, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 47 minutes. On Mubi.

In the relentlessly bleak military drama "Butterfly Vision," Lilia (Rita Burkovska) is a Ukrainian drone pilot struggling to readjust to life on the home front after enduring months in captivity at the hands of Russian separatists in the Donbas region.

The story begins as Lilia makes the trek home, where she tends to an array of keloid scars and a flood of disturbing memories. She receives limited support from her anguished mother (Myroslava Vytrykhovska-Makar) and even less from her husband, Tokha (Lyubomyr Valivots), an extremist militia member who seems capable of accessing only two frames of mind: seething rancor or violent rage.

This series of upsetting events grows even more dire, though, after we learn that Lilia was raped while captive and has become pregnant as a result.

From the outset, the director, Maksym Nakonechnyi, establishes a cinematic language that incorporates footage from various sources: livestream feeds, aerial drone video, broadcast news B-roll. Perhaps the film's most audacious choice is to use the texture of these formats — their lags, distortion and pixelation — when conveying Lilia's daily torrent of post-traumatic stress. The effect is jarring, and feels less like a window into her experience than a brash camera trick.

But "Butterfly Vision" distinguishes itself in its setting. The film was made before Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, and its story captures an early wartime phase when attitudes toward the conflict were divided. In one scene, Lilia boards a bus and claims exemption from the fare because of her status as a veteran. Vexed and disapproving, the driver and passengers raise a ruckus until she disembarks. The film might aim to deliver an aesthetic and emotional jolt, but it is the mundane, interpersonal moments that linger.

NATALIA WINKELMAN

NEW PLAZA CiNEMA @ MACAULAY HONORS COLLEGE
THE BEST IN INTERNATIONAL CINEMA!
FRIDAY • MAY 19
CLEO FROM 5 TO 7 4:00PM
THOSE WHO REMAINED 5:45PM
*THE EIGHT MOUNTAINS 7:30PM
SATURDAY • MAY 20
"POWERHOUSE OF A MOVIE" - MANOHLA DARGIS
*R.M.N. 12:15PM
*OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN 2:45PM
*THE EIGHT MOUNTAINS 4:50PM
PENELOPE CRUZ STARRING IN L'IMMENSITA 7:45PM
SUNDAY • MAY 21
MY NIGHT AT MAUD'S 12:15PM
Q&A W/ FILM HISTORIAN MAX ALVAREZ
*THE EIGHT MOUNTAINS 2:45PM
PENELOPE CRUZ STARRING IN L'IMMENSITA 5:35PM
*OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN 7:30PM
*NEW YORK TIMES CRITIC'S PICK!
35 WEST 67 ST BETW COLUMBUS & CENTRAL PK WEST
PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE AT newplazacinema.org

Paris 4 W 58TH ST MANHATTAN
OPENS TODAY
VICTIM/SUSPECT
"UNQUESTIONABLY IMPORTANT."
- THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER
FRI-SUN 12:30, 2:50, 7:50PM
THE MOTHER
STARRING JENNIFER LOPEZ
FRI-SUN 5:10PM
FOR ALL SHOWTIMES: PARISTHEATERNYC.COM 212-688-3800
NETFLIX

IFC CENTER 323 SIXTH AVENUE AT WEST THIRD STREET 212-924-7771
START TODAY!
THROUGH 6/1 THE FILMS OF DAVID LYNCH INFO AT IFCCENTER.COM
MOON GARDEN 2:55, 7:30*, 9:45PM *Q&A WITH DIR. RYAN STEVENS HARRIS FRI AT 7:30! FRI-SAT 7:30 SHOW IN 35MM
VICTIM/SUSPECT 11:00AM, 2:50PM, 6:50PM* *Q&A WITH DIR. NANCY SCHWARTZMAN FRI AT 6:50! OPEN CAPTION: SAT & MON 6:50, SUN & TUE 11:00
BLACKBERRY 1:10, 3:50, 6:40, 9:15PM OPEN CAPTIONS: FRI & WED 6:40, SAT & MON 1:10
MONICA 1:55, 4:30, 7:10, 9:40PM OPEN CAPTIONS: SAT & TUE 4:30, SUN & THU 7:10
PARTY GIRL 10:40AM, 8:50PM
CHILE '76 12:45, 5:15PM | R.M.N. 11:15AM
SICK OF MYSELF 4:45PM
NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE THE CRUCIBLE SAT-SUN 11:00AM, MON 6:30PM
WAVERLY MIDNIGHTS FRI-SAT A CLOCKWORK ORANGE 11:00PM | ALIENS 11:35PM
BACK TO THE FUTURE 11:40PM | THEY LIVE 11:55PM
Tickets & info: IFCCENTER.COM | • AD, ▾ CC

FILM FORUM
Houston St (w. of 6 Av) 212-727-8110
TICKETS ONLINE filmforum.org
STAY AWAKE 12:40, 2:45, 4:50, 7:00*, 9:20
*Q&A w/Filmmaker JAMIE SISLEY & Star WYATT OLEFF
THE CITY: REAL AND IMAGINED
OVER 60 MOVIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS
SEE WEBSITE FOR SCHEDULE
THE MELT GOES ON FOREVER THE ART & TIMES OF DAVID HAMMONS 1:30 & 6:00
32 SOUNDS 3:50 & 8:10
FELLINI'S I VITELLONI 1:10 & 6:15
JOYLAND 3:30 & 8:30
ALL 4 MUST END SOON

QUAD CINEMA
34 WEST 13TH ST QUADCINEMA.COM FRI SHOWTIMES
NOW PLAYING
FRANCISCA ALEGRÍA'S THE COW WHO SANG A SONG INTO THE FUTURE
EXCLUSIVE MANHATTAN ENGAGEMENT 1PM 4PM 6PM 8PM 10PM
DOMINIK MOLL'S THE NIGHT OF THE 12TH
EXCLUSIVE MANHATTAN ENGAGEMENT 2:10PM 4:35PM 7PM 9:25PM
A.V. ROCKWELL'S A THOUSAND AND ONE 2:35PM 7:10PM
DANIEL GOLDHABER'S HOW TO BLOW UP A PIPELINE
EXCLUSIVE MANHATTAN ENGAGEMENT 5:00PM 9:35PM
ARI ASTER'S BEAU IS AFRAID 2:55PM 8:30PM* *OPEN CAPTIONS
LITTLE RICHARD: I AM EVERYTHING
EXCLUSIVE MANHATTAN ENGAGEMENT 1:55PM 6:20PM
CHECK QUADCINEMA.COM FOR ALL FILMS & SHOWTIMES

WE ARE OPEN!
ANGELIKA FILM CENTER
angelikafilmcenter.com
Corner of Houston & Mercer 212-995-2570
MASTER GARDNER 10:30, 11:30AM, 1:00, 2:00, 3:30, 4:30, 6:00, 7:00, 8:30, 9:30PM
SANCTUARY 10:40AM, 12:00, 12:50, 2:25, 3:05, 4:50, 5:20, 7:30*, 8:00*, 10:10, 10:45PM
*Q&A: AFTER 7:30PM & 8:00PM SHOWS
THE STARLING GIRL 10:50AM, 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45PM
L'IMMENSITA 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00PM
STREAMING - CURATED FOR FILM LOVERS
ANGELIKAANYWHERE.COM - OC = OPEN CAPTION SHOWINGS

Film at Lincoln Center
MASTER GARDENER
STARTS TODAY! 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45 (WITH Q&A), 9:45PM (WITH INTRO)
CHILE '76
DAILY: 1:45, 4:00, 6:15, 8:30PM
UNREST
2:00, 4:15, 6:30, 8:45PM
144 & 165 W. 65th St. filmlinc.org

Cinéma Village
22 E. 12th St. 924-3363
BAFF
Big Apple Film Festival 2023
For Film Schedule, Information and Tickets, visit CinemaVillage.com
Advance tickets at cinemavillage.com

WESLEY MORRIS | FILM REVIEW

Carbon Neutral? Probably Not.

Twenty-two years and nine sequels in, the 'Fast and Furious' franchise still won't pull over.


GIULIA PARMIGIANI/UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Jason Momoa stars as Dante Reyes in the latest "Fast and Furious" movie, "Fast X."

Fast X
Rated PG-13. Running time: 2 hour 21 minutes. In theaters.

SO MUCH HAS GONE over the top in these "Fast and Furious" movies — stunt work and demolition, obviously; but also family trees, racing, *race*, plots, pates, biceps, upper backs — that it wasn't until I saw what Jason Momoa was up to in this new installment, "Fast X," that I realized how much the acting had stayed under the table. He swoops in to play a flamboyant terrorist named Dante Reyes. And it's pretty clear, from the pitiful quips he's been given and the light-loafer treatment he's going for, that the mustache Momoa's twirling isn't his. It's Rip Taylor's.

For half a century, Taylor ran all over American TV in a hail of confetti that he threw for himself. He didn't act. He made appearances. That's how Momoa operates here, showing up wherever the movie needs him (on patio furniture, at the top of the Aldeadávila Dam) in lavender and snakeskin and billowing everything, horny to blow something up. These movies have been out of good ideas since "Furious 7" eight years ago, mired in government-flavored tug-of-wars over hacking, surveillance and tech. And Momoa's here to zhuzh things up. So along with Taylor's mustache, Momoa twirls himself. It's like watching an overcup oak go trick-or-treating as a Christmas tree.

And yet, even though he destroys the Spanish Steps of Rome with alacrity and purrs lines like, "I know what you're thinking. And yes: the carpet matches the drapes," it's not zhuzh-y *enough*. Momoa is giving the Joker. But Cesar Romero's. Of course, he's the only person here committed to clear and present lunacy, going for postmacho chill, refashioning the quote marks around him into neck pillows.

Five movies and a dozen years ago, Dom (Vin Diesel) and the gang trashed favelas in Rio de Janeiro and killed Dante's drug-lord father (along with scores of innocent Brazilians, but we're not going there today). Now, with the series at the bottom of its barrel, Dante wants revenge. This means sending a giant bomb barreling toward the Vatican. He doesn't quite pull that off, but his wish comes true to make wanted terrorists of Dom and the rest of the gang, creating a rift between them and the feds they covertly work for and spoiling the driving lessons Dom had been giving to his 8-year-old son, Brian (Leo Abelo Perry).

There are about five intersected plot lines, credited to Justin Lin and Dan Mazeau (the director Louis Leterrier replaces Lin as mayhem manager). Dom on the run; Dom's brother, Jakob (John Cena), babysitting Brian (they're on the run, too); some of Dom's crew — Roman (Tyrese Gibson), Tej (Chris "Ludacris" Bridges), Han (Sung Kang) and Ramsey (Nathalie Emmanuel) — all but backpacking through Europe; Dom's wife, Letty (Michelle Rodriguez), arrested and locked up alongside the crew's cyberterrorist nemesis, Cipher (Charlize Theron); and the two feds, Aimes (Alan Ritchson) and Tess (Brie Larson), at odds with each other over whether to aid or apprehend the "F&F" gang. And just about every strand stems from Dante's pique and gets left as a cliffhanger that won't be resolved until years from now in, what, "Fast X+1"?

The best I can say about all of this is that it didn't bore me. But this is a series that, by the time its fourth and fifth installments arrived, had merged the original movie's casually erotic, multiethnic, omni-racial car culture that made the original movie pop with the "can't top that" set pieces of Hollywood summer movies. It wasn't that that fusion was never boring. It had the thrill of newness. How many times have I laughed, in awe, at what this series could do with all kinds of vehicles and the people behind them. It insisted that a universe of nonwhite folks could meet the priorities of blockbuster filmmaking and still rake up money around the planet. And it was exciting to see who they could enfold into that agenda (Dwayne Johnson, Jason Statham, Helen Mirren, Kurt Russell). We're talking about 22 years and nine sequels, though. Stacking the rotation with two former professional wrestlers, four Oscar winners (Rita Moreno gets jammed in here as Dom's grandmother) plus Aquaman no longer feels like radical popular-culture inclusion. It feels defensive and greedy: *Can the Avengers top that?* From an industrial standpoint, it does expose how much less gonzo our movies are now. What other franchise would've had the nerve to imagine Statham as Mirren's son? To put Diesel in Moreno's arms, Larson's good graces and Theron's cross hairs?

There's a charitable, cash-free reason nobody wants these things to end. Despite Paul Walker's having been dead for a decade, in these movies, his character, Brian O'Conner, is still alive, still married to Dom's sister, still a dad, still living on a beach somewhere. The opening minutes of "Fast X" reimagine the death of Dante's daddy in "Fast 5" and therefore grant the film an excuse to reanimate Walker. It just strains credulity that Brian would be sitting idle now while his homies face extinction. But that's an implication of what these movies are asking us to believe, that his wife, Mia (Jordana Brewster), is more down for the defense of their family than he is. So letting this series go means letting Walker go, too.

Self-importance has made these later movies dumb and dumber.

But that sentimentality leaves these movies with nowhere to go but up its own annals. (Well, there is Antarctica, the funniest of the datelines here.)

Instead, we get the wrong kind of chaos. You can see it in the incoherence of the driving — and there's not enough of that, either. Which means wasting the series's lead actor and flame keeper. These movies used to know what they had in Vin Diesel. Put him behind the wheel of anything, and he's a star. The cameras in "Fast X" are too busy to truly take in all the furrowing, the glints, the scowls. He's not much of a husband, lover, father or mastermind in these movies, but give his foot a gas pedal and suddenly the man can act. His best moments in "Fast X" involve that stuff at the Vatican. He seems to mean it. Dom's enormous crucifix isn't an accessory. It's a promise. But later, when he's pulling two charred helicopter husks behind him, Diesel's lack of concern concerned me. The thrill is gone.

It's not there in the sequence in which that ball-bomb eats a chunk of Rome or any of the many, many shootouts and fistfights. Not even in the brawl Rodriguez and Theron endure that should have killed both of their characters. Visually, it's as messy as a lot of the sequences in "Fast X." It's hard to care about a fight you can't follow or be bothered to suspend disbelief for. That's the true death knell for this series: rationalism, nit-picking, disillusionment. (*Why can't Brian come out and play?*)

The series doesn't need Momoa's vamping. The camp was always coming from inside the garage, the way these movies operated in defiance of physics, chronology, narrative logic and DNA. Their subject was criminals conflicted about going legit. Now they're practically a government agency, out protecting the planet — and they're so far through the moral looking glass that everybody looks too comfortable. There's a reason the movies' insistence on family starts to feel laughable. It makes us feel like we're at Olive Garden. Their dumbness made them important. Now, self-importance has made them dumb. Characters are now explaining these movies to each other — and where great, big, bronzed Aimes is concerned, *man*splaining them. They're saying stuff like, "It's like a cult with cars," "The fallout will be existential" and "This family has gotten their hands dirty to keep ours clean."

These movies used to know what about them was ridiculous. They'd give that to us until our hearts broke the speed limit. But I've already seen Diesel drive at a 90-degree angle before. The old bravado currently reeks of formula. The nerve is shot. There was a time when this series would have had Dante send a *pair* of balls hurtling toward the Vatican.

GLENN KENNY | FILM REVIEW

How About the Best Two Out of Three?

A rematch aims to reach the heights of a comedy classic.

THE 1992 SPORTS COMEDY "White Man Can't Jump," written and directed by Ron Shelton, was a cheeky, provocative film that took a raucously skewed view of race relations and street ball. It's a well-liked film, but not so immortal that the prospect of a remake would inspire thoughts of sacrilege.

So this film, directed by Calmatic from a script by Kenya Barris and Doug Hall, feels less like a desecration than a missed opportunity. And as missed opportunities go, it's pretty serious.

The pickup basketball partners here are the rapper Jack Harlow as Jeremy, who is white, and the actor Sinqua Walls as Kamal, who is Black. Kamal was a promising high school player whose downfall is gradually revealed through flashbacks. Jeremy has two blown-out knees, a painkiller addiction and a burgeoning reputation as a con artist. Both have the standard-issue "strong women" in their lives, and both are constant disappointments to these women.

In the 1992 picture, lead actors Woody Harrelson and Wesley Snipes were animated enough to make you believe they could leap right out of the frame. Their female foil was played by Rosie Perez, and her subplot — involving her becoming a contestant on the TV quiz show "Jeopardy!" — was one of the film's many quirky delights.

This version has little quirk and less spark. While Harlow is a game and capable comedic performer up to a point — he demonstrated as much when he hosted "Saturday Night Live" last year — he doesn't have Harrelson's near-anarchic unpredictability. And Walls, while appealing, can't get within striking distance of Snipes' intensity.

The script by Barris and Hall, veterans of the television sitcom "black-ish," does the actors no favors. A scene in which Jeremy brings a bottle of Hennessy brandy to Kamal's kid's birthday party, hoping to show off his "authenticity" with respect to Black tastes in booze, is meant to be funny. One could see how it might be; but it falls awkwardly flat.

And try this on for exposition: "My girl's a crazy talented choreographer who's wasting her time teaching classes at a dance studio because my income's so shaky right now." Thanks for the update, Jeremy.

Near the end of the movie, Kamal's father, Benji, played by the spectacularly talented Lance Reddick, has to deliver this stilted line to his son from a hospital bed: "My biggest regret is not giving you the tools to work through your problems."

The supposed trash talk that Kamal and Jeremy exchange throughout, sometimes good-naturedly and sometimes in earnest, is similarly uninspired.

By the time we get to the second half of the narrative, the movie has abandoned the sometimes near-screwball comedy of the Shelton film and pivoted to triumph-over-adversity drama, complete with big-money games the duo can't resist, despite the odds against them.

The basketball action is similar to the script, that is, indifferently staged and shot. This movie not only doesn't jump, it barely gets off the couch.


HULU

Sinqua Walls, far left, and Jack Harlow star in a remake of the 1992 movie "White Men Can't Jump."

White Men Can't Jump
Rated R for, what else, language. Running time: 1 hour 41 minutes. On Hulu.

FILM REVIEWS

White Building

Not rated. In Khmer, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. In theaters.

The title of Kavich Neang's richly observed feature, "White Building," is, first of all, an exaggeration: The dilapidated apartment block it describes is so chipped and black with soot that it's barely white; indeed, it is so falling apart that it's barely a building.

But for Samnang (Piseth Chhun), the young protagonist of this sensitive and largely autobiographical coming-of-age story, it is home, as the real White Building is for Neang.

The building, in central Phnom Penh, is an apt symbol of the often excruciating changes Cambodia has endured over the past 60 years. It was built in the 1960s to house civil servants, then emptied during the Khmer Rouge's forced relocations of the 1970s. In the '80s, it became home to working-class people like Samnang's diabetic father (Sithan Hout), who, like Neang's, is a sculptor. Now its inhabitants are being pushed to take a lousy deal so it can be demolished for new development, in a city they can no longer afford.

Unlike his parents, Samnang has no memories of the Khmer Rouge. He and his friends grew up with cellphones and hip-hop, and they dream of becoming a famous dance troupe. They want what other boys of their generation want: girlfriends, Nikes, a chance to prove themselves.

Neang excels at that Tarkovskian trick of rendering the small details of decay — a cracked tile, a leaking ceiling — with such lived-in precision that they feel somehow specific and surreal at once; like the title, images strain their own semantic boundaries. The film's loose plotting and secondary character development can leave a few too many hanging threads, but its sense of place is so palpable you can almost smell the smoky city markets, the sweat, the hormones.

AUSTIN CONSIDINE


KIMSTIM

Piseth Chhun, left, and Chinnaro Soem in the film "White Building."

Stay Awake

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 34 minutes. In theaters.

Jamie Sisley's narrative feature directorial debut, "Stay Awake," is not a novel story for those with a family member or loved one struggling with addiction. A small-town drama, the film stars Wyatt Oleff and Fin Argus as two teenage brothers, Ethan and Derek, who are forced to become caregivers for their mother, Michelle (Chrissy Metz), after she becomes dependent on prescription painkillers. It's an all-too-familiar scenario across the United States, and the highs, lows and disappointments that Michelle and her sons face throughout her rocky treatment are both incredibly human and unfortunately predictable.

"Stay Awake" does its best to center both its addiction story and Ethan and Derek's own separate coming-of-age arcs, all without demonizing any of its characters.

It's an admirable goal that sometimes comes off as clunky and meandering, such as when Ethan awkwardly breaks up with his girlfriend by revealing he plans to go to a different college. The ensuing drama doesn't quite match up to the life-or-death stakes present elsewhere in the film, or even to other situations Ethan faces, like having a secret crush on a male classmate. Despite such shortcomings, Oleff, Argus and Metz succeed in depicting both the frustrations and the compassion associated with caring for relatives who continuously harm themselves.

CLAIRE SHAFFER

MANOHLA DARGIS | CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

At Cannes, Star Power and Progress

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

crowds — initially feels like a provocation, almost as if McQueen were equating the Holocaust with lockdowns. As the movie's grim accounting continues, though, the juxtaposition only underscores how blissfully privileged these protesters are to be able to gather, love, pray and simply *live*.

The stars and the red carpet dominate the world's attention during Cannes, but it's the festival's unwavering commitment to film art that remains its greatest strength. There are always questionable and seemingly mercenary programming choices, as at any festival, and the halls of the event's headquarters invariably hum with rumors about back-room deals and quotas. It's unclear why the organizers — led by the festival's director, Thierry Frémaux — decided to kick off this year's event with "Jeanne du Barry," a particularly unfortunate choice for a festival with a history of bad openers.

Presumably Johnny Depp, a heat-seeking target for the armies of paparazzi amassed here, helps explain the movie's presence. Whatever the case, on Tuesday, some 3,000 festivalgoers — and audiences who saw it simultaneously in cinemas across France — trooped into theaters to watch this bore. Directed by Maïwenn, who also stars, the movie tracks its title character from her pastoral rural childhood to her cosseted, apparently fabulous adulthood as a celebrated Parisian courtesan, fame that eventually led her directly into the bespoke bed of Louis XV.

The king is played by a powdered and bewigged Depp, who looks suitably indolent, though perhaps because he's underused. It isn't much of a part. The king is mainly there to look gaga at Jeanne, which he does a great deal, though it's a tough call whether Louis lavishes as much attention on Jeanne as Maïwenn does. Among all the close-ups of Jeanne giggling, Maïwenn folds in some palace intrigue and the briefest nod at the terror to come. Yet while Maïwenn draws attention to her lover's son, the future, ill-fated Louis XVI, his main role is to serve as an ally to Jeanne in the viperous Versailles court.

That most of the vipers are women is an index of the movie's narrow horizons and parochial attitudes. It seeks to celebrate Jeanne, portraying her as a joyously emancipated woman, never mind that her liberation is entirely contingent on pleasuring men. She wears pants, she loves sex, she's kind to the Black child Louis gives her as a gift! Yet while most everyone at court frowns upon Jeanne, Maïwenn primarily focuses on the torments that the court ladies visit on her, suggesting that the big problem at Versailles in the 18th century was the bitter jealousy of bad uptight women.

"Jeanne du Barry" ends before the guillotine makes an appearance, unfortunately. It was an exasperating way to start this year's festival given how hard women have fought to be taken seriously here. There's some comfort that "Jeanne" isn't contending for the Palme d'Or, which would be an embarrassment, but is being presented out of competition. Other titles out of the running include two of the hottest tickets here: Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon" and "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny," directed by James Mangold. (I'll have more to say about both after their premieres.)

Both the Scorsese and "Indiana Jones" will jolt the festival, which has been fairly sleepy since Depp and company came and went. I liked two competition titles that screened early, "Le Retour," from the French filmmaker Catherine Corsini, and "Monster," from the Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda. Both are moving family dramas, with "Le Retour" centered on three Black Frenchwomen during a fraught interlude in Corsica. Like Kore-eda — whose movie is a characteristically poignant drama about an anguished fifth grader — Corsini uses family to reflect on larger issues without losing sight of the characters' intimate struggles. Both movies appeal to your intellect while drawing tears.

Corsini is one of the seven women with a movie in the 21-title main lineup, which is a very good number. Cannes has always been happy to have young, beautiful women in gowns and high heels ornamenting its red carpet, but it has been far less welcoming to women who also make movies. The Belgian filmmaker Chantal Akerman, one of the giants of contemporary cinema, had three movies in the official program while she was alive (she died in 2015), none in the main competition. Another titan of the art, Agnès Varda, had nearly a dozen movies at Cannes, but only one was chosen for the main competition: her 1962 film "Cléo From 5 to 7." At least the festival named one of its theaters after her.

Some of the seven women are competing for the first time; a few, like the French director Catherine Breillat — here with "Last Summer" — are returning. Breillat was at Cannes in 2007 with "The Last Mistress," a raw, exuberant, impolite period piece about women and desire starring Asia Argento. A few years later, in 2018, Argento shook up the festival when, onstage during the closing ceremony, she announced that she had been raped by Harvey Weinstein at the 1997 event. "This festival was his hunting ground," Argento said, bringing the #MeToo movement to Cannes with a fury. (Argento was later accused of sexually assaulting an underage male actor, which she denied.)

Cannes organizers tend to wave off criticism, but whatever their public position toward the complaints lobbed their way, including from many women over many frustrating decades, they clearly pay attention, as suggested by the record number of women in the main competition. This record matters because Cannes does. The festival doesn't simply command the world's attention each year; it makes careers, revives reputations, confers status, makes the next deal (or two) possible and serves as a crucial run-up to the Academy Awards. More important, Cannes publicly and very prominently bequeaths rarefied status on filmmakers, a status that has historically been granted to men.

This isn't simply because women like Akerman and Varda have had far fewer opportunities to direct than men. Neither artist needed Cannes's benediction; they were brilliant filmmakers without its regular love. It's difficult to quantify how (if) their careers would have been different if they had been in regular contention. But it's also hard not to think that their careers would have been easier and the money would have flowed more generously in their direction if they'd been routinely programmed alongside the festival's many beloved male auteurs. Certainly Varda and Akerman would have done right as the head of the jury, a position enjoyed this year by Ruben Ostlund, who's won the Palme twice. I hope that his choices are better than his movies.



VIA CANNES FILM FESTIVAL



STEPHANIE BRANCHU/WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS

Top, "Occupied City," a documentary by Steve McQueen about Amsterdam during World War II. Above, Johnny Depp, left, and Maïwenn in "Jeanne du Barry."

FILM REVIEWS

Museum Of the Revolution

Not rated. In Serbo-Croatian, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 31 minutes. In theaters.

Srdan Keca's quiet observational documentary "Museum of the Revolution" is set in the purlieus of a onetime utopian building project: a monument to Yugoslavia that was meant to serve as a socialist gathering space. The structure was abandoned in the late 1970s, and today its unfinished basement level has become the dwelling place for a small community of unhoused people.

The film opens with archival footage of a midcentury construction site, but soon pivots to showcase a series of haunting images of the museum as it currently stands: dark, dank and littered with debris. Successive scenes focus on three inhabitants of the space: an older woman named Mara, a boisterous child named Milica and Milica's weary mother, Vera, who earns money scrubbing the windshields of cars stopped at motorway red lights.

A lot of the film unfolds without speaking. Minutes pass as Mara and Milica amuse themselves together or enjoy time alone. The dialogue we receive offers snippets of the women's life stories: We learn that Mara is estranged from her daughter, that Vera's husband is incarcerated and that child welfare services tried to take custody of Milica at least once before.

Keca often captures the women during spells of waiting, and builds a mood of transience by depicting them across seasons, spaces and hours of the day. This is an engrossing documentary, and one that raises questions about the ethics of intervening (or not) in the lives of people struggling to get by. That these queries hover unresolved may leave viewers uneasy, but it also positions us alongside the subjects, waiting for a solution that's yet to arrive.

NATALIA WINKELMAN

The Taking

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 16 minutes. In theaters.

Whether it's John Wayne films or Chevrolet ads, Monument Valley has been immortalized in the American imagination as a symbol of this nation's vast potential.

"The Taking," a new documentary directed by Alexandre O. Philippe, examines the site's complicated position as a representation of the Old West despite being located on Navajo land.

In the film, images and clips of movies, TV shows and advertising campaigns that have featured Monument Valley are accompanied by voice-overs that explain how white cowboys have been viewed as heroes and Native Americans as aggressors, obscuring a history of genocide and oppression.

The film argues that perhaps no one has been more central to this effort than the director John Ford, who used the region as the backdrop for his westerns, with the dramatic landscape evoking and perpetuating ideals of freedom and liberation central to his stories of rugged cowboys and villainous "Indians."

Obscured in this mythmaking is the reality of the Navajo people, many of whom still live in the region without running water or access to stable incomes. "The Taking" is successful in demonstrating the way in which Monument Valley has become a canvas onto which the public can superimpose their own ideas and myths. But had it included more current images of the region and the realities of the Navajo people, it may have been more effective in replacing these myths, going beyond film analysis to altering imagination.

CONCEPCIÓN DE LEÓN



ROBERT MURATORE/DEKANALOG

Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park has been a backdrop for films and ads.

Anna Nicole Smith: You Don't Know Me

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 56 minutes. On Netflix.

"Anna Nicole Smith: You Don't Know Me," a new documentary about the model, actress and '90s tabloid sensation, follows a trend established by other nonfiction portraits of démodé stars released in recent years, such as "Britney vs Spears" and "Pamela, a Love Story." Half biography, half supercilious media studies essay, these films are intended to be sort of pop-cultural correctives, ones which deconstruct the popular image of celebrity by demonstrating (not unfairly) that their subjects were vilified and callously misjudged in their times.

This movie's director, Ursula Macfarlane, tries to show the real Smith — who was born Vickie Lynn Hogan and raised in Texas — through a combination of cruel archival news clips (The National Enquirer calls her "dumb," Howard Stern mocks her weight); moody, true-crime-esque B-roll; and interviews with Smith's uncle, her brother and her former bodyguard, plus a number of tabloid journalists, reality-TV producers and members of the paparazzi.

The interviews are short on insights. We hear both that Smith "craved attention" and "always liked being the center of attention." We learn that she sometimes acquired that attention in savvy ways, willing herself to superstardom through a public image she meticulously styled, and later attracted attention despite efforts to escape it, at great cost to her privacy and mental health. But the solemn excavation of Smith's life and death — she died at 39 of a drug overdose, in 2007 — ultimately brings the movie, despite Macfarlane's well-meaning efforts, squarely into the territory of what it's attempting to condemn: lurid voyeurism. Smith's contentious inheritance case, the disputed paternity of her daughter, the tragic death of her son: The movie cannot help but sensationalize these events, even though it relates them in a self-consciously plaintive register rather than a gawking one. Smith deserved better than how she was treated. And she deserves better than this.

CALUM MARSH

Fine Arts

WILL HEINRICH | ART REVIEW



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER FISHER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Yayoi Kusama's latest "Infinity Mirror Room," titled "Dreaming of Earth's Sphericity, I Would Offer My Love," is the star of the show at David Zwirner Gallery in Manhattan.

Taking On the Infinite Again With a Sly Wink

The Japanese artist who long ago became a brand tweaks expectations in a new show.

ONCE A HIGH-PROFILE FIXTURE of the 1960s New York avant-garde, Yayoi Kusama has long since become an icon, in the sense of a visually recognizable brand. Her polka dots, her spectacular sculptures of flowers and pumpkins, and most of all her "Infinity Mirror Rooms," which regularly draw crowds willing to wait hours for as little as one minute inside — it's all as familiar, and as reliably perfect, as Coca-Cola. Like Coca-Cola, it also goes with anything: A recent collaboration with Louis Vuitton even included Instagram and Snapchat filters.

The downside of being a brand might be a certain predictability. But being so well known actually provides a visual thinker as adept and inventive as Kusama with a kind of head start on shocking and delighting her audience, because she can achieve so much just by tweaking our expectations. Her latest room, a 13-foot-high white cube with a fully mirrored interior titled "Dreaming of Earth's Sphericity, I Would Offer My Love," is as close as pop art comes to a revelation.

Unlike most previous rooms, this one, which is showing at David Zwirner Gallery in Manhattan as part of the new exhibition "I Spend Each Day Embracing Flowers," has windows large enough to see through from the inside — 16 full, half or quarter circles colored red, yellow, green or blue. Each partial circle is hard against an edge, so that, with its reflection, it appears whole. Among other things, this means that your gaze doesn't pause at the edge, instead gliding painlessly right into the mirror world.

Where previous infinity rooms flirted with claustrophobia, now, because you can keep half an eye on the everyday world, you'll contemplate the infinite with bemusement. You might catch a reflection of your own legs superimposed on someone outside, as in a Dan Graham pavilion, or find yourself peering out curiously at the yellow-tinted gallery.

From other angles, the circles are opaque, evoking a Modernist disco party as they bubble into the distance. As usual, the best action happens in the corners, where you can watch miniature reflections of yourself walk right past one another — your ego snubbing your id, or vice versa — or convene four of your doppelgängers in an intimate tête-à-tête. I was so interested in all my own miniature critics that I didn't notice the crisp, full-size reflection right in front of me until just before I stepped out.

Along with the mirrored room, "I Spend Each Day Embracing Flowers" includes three enormous steel flowers; three yellow and black "pumpkin" walls polished to a sports-car shine; and nearly three dozen new acrylic paintings. Graphic, boldly colored compositions of dots and lines, the paintings reach across the room and grab you by the collar, particularly one untitled canvas from 2021, which is just slightly too busy to take in at a glance. The flowers are charming, if nothing more, but the pumpkins, with their hatlike stems and sexy undulations, are surprisingly complex and sophisticated.

Still, the "Infinity Mirror Room" is the star, because, as promised by the name, it offers something for everyone and can never be depleted.

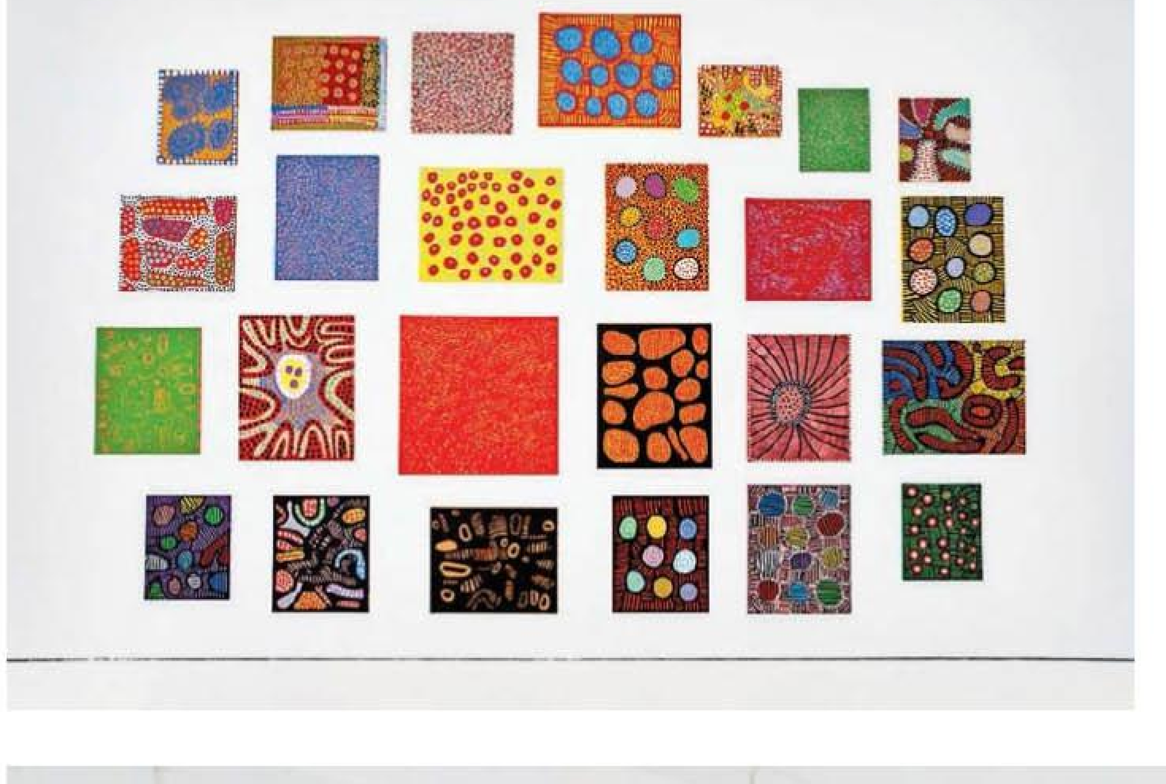
It's a high-concept Japanese teahouse whose low yellow door forces you to stoop as you go in. It's a metaphor for consciousness, the art work, or any other ostensibly sealed box of illusory vistas. It's an Instagram-ready spectacle, famous for being famous. It's the very definition of "what you see is what you get," but you could never find every interesting detail, even if you stayed all day.

The only issue is the line, which is first come first served. As a critic, I got to skip to the front, so I asked a few visitors what they thought.

Caterina Alves, visiting from London, had waited about an hour and felt it was totally worth it. "First of all, she's amazing," she said, adding, "This is the only free exhibition I've found of Kusama." (The gallery will arrange visits for school groups, too.)

Gina Noy, close to the door, felt that the hour-plus wait added to the experience. "It's great," she said, gesturing at the women standing behind her, "because we just chatted."

And Stephanie Helen, whom I caught up with after she came out, proposed this general advice: "If it's something good, wait on line for it."







Above, Kusama's pumpkins, with their hatlike stems and sexy undulations, are surprisingly complex and sophisticated. At top, also part of the "I Spend Each Day Embracing Flowers" exhibition, are a collection of Kusama's acrylic paintings and one of three enormous steel flowers in the show.

CRITIC'S PICK

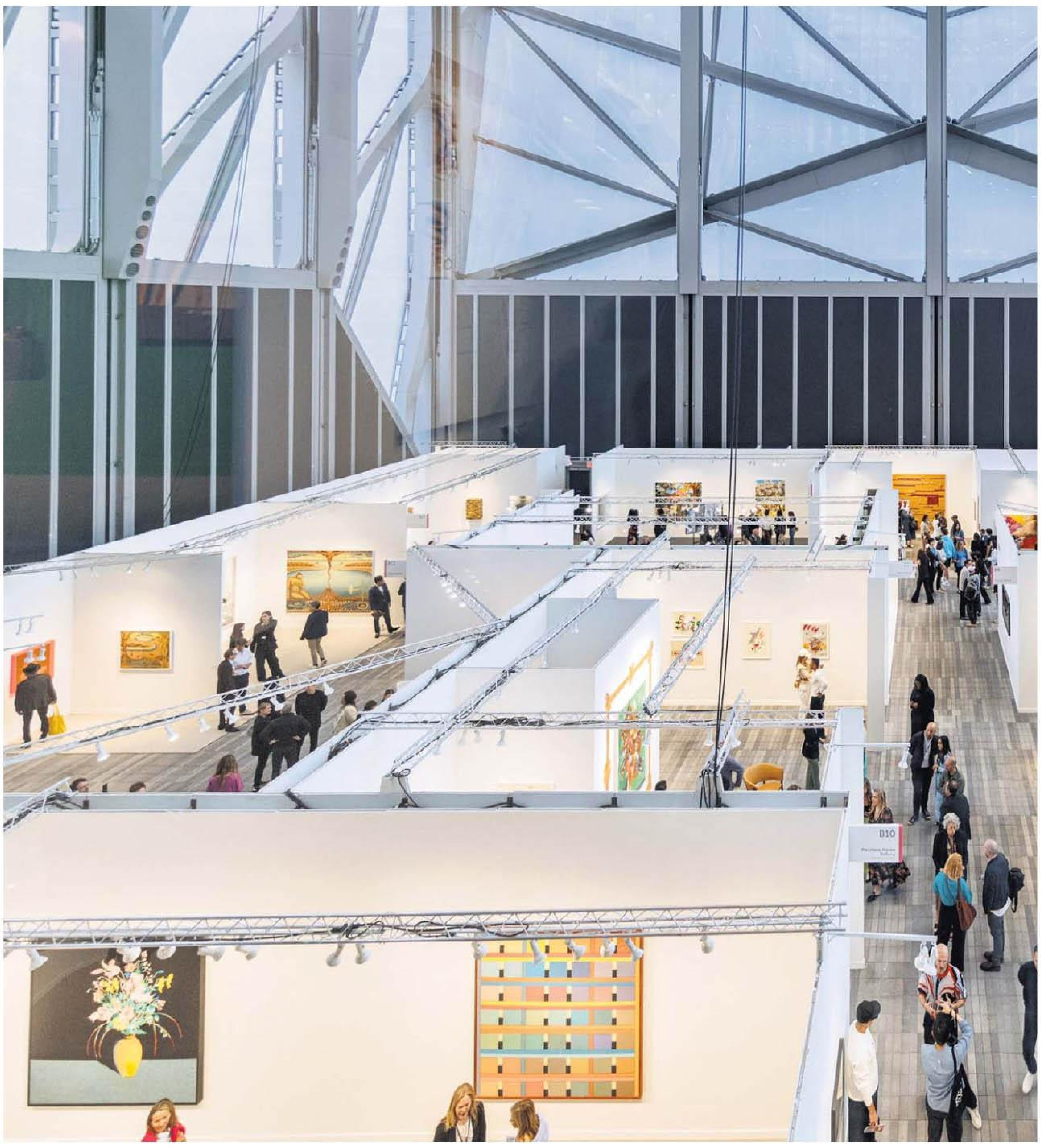
Yayoi Kusama: I Spend Each Day Embracing Flowers
Through July 21 at David Zwirner Gallery, 519, 525 and 533 West 19th Street in Manhattan; 212-727-2070, davidzwirner.com.


REMASTERED
OLD MASTERS from the COLLECTION of J.E. SAFRA
SELLING WITHOUT RESERVE
AUCTION
24 May
VIEWING
20–24 May
20 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10020
CONTACT
François de Poortere
fdepoortere@christies.com
+1 212 636 2469
Jonquil O'Reilly
joreilly@christies.com
+1 212 636 2478
christies.com/safra
FRANCESCO FONTEBASSO (1707–1769)
The Triumph of David (detail)
oil on canvas
39¾ x 53 in. (100.9 x 134.7 cm.)
Estimate: $50,000–70,000
NO RESERVE
Find out more
CHRISTIE'S

HOLLAND COTTER | ART FAIR REPORT

Easier to Visit, And Tougher To Ignore

At Frieze New York, 69 galleries are participating, and one-person shows are among the most exciting.



Right, a view of the Frieze Fair, spread over three floors at the Shed in Manhattan. Below, Matthew Ronay's "The Crack, the Swell, an Earth, an Ode" (2022), at the Casey Kaplan booth.

AT ITS DEBUT IN 2012, **Frieze New York,** a spinoff of Frieze in London, came off as an imperious enterprise. The fair commanded an island in the East River. Getting there could be difficult and expensive. And once there, negotiating the miles of pedestrian aisles formed by some 120 galleries made for a humbling degree of exertion.

This has changed. The fair, which is on view till Sunday, is now reachably moored in Manhattan, a block or so from the Hudson, at the Shed on West 30th Street. At roughly half its original size — 69 galleries this year — it makes for a quite doable walkabout spread over three floors. Apart from now-standard "V.I.P" perks, highfalutin' is downplayed.

Which, of course, makes sense. Art fairs are trade fairs. On the supply side, professionals gather to market and mingle, to compete and compare, to roll out product and hope that it sells. On the demand side, collectors get a one-stop scan of new retail and a chance to drop cash if they like what they see.

Even for those who aren't in the business of selling or buying, fairs are transactional events. For the admission fee you put down — and it's a lot of money now, $55 and upward just to get in the door — you expect a vitalizing viewing experience. And **Frieze New York 2023** delivers that, specifically in the form of a baker's dozen of solid one-person shows, and in a historical group whose quietly impassioned spirit threads through the fair.



Several of the solos are on the first of the fair's three levels. And in two, installed close to each other, a history of contrasts plays out. **Hauser & Wirth** has assembled a small, gorgeous, somber survey of painting, sculpture and drawing by **Jack Whitten** (1939-2018), a Black artist who early fled the Jim Crow South of his birth, never to return, and who, thanks to an unwelcoming market, has a low art-world profile until quite late in his life. Now he's a huge presence.

Across the aisle from Hauser's beautiful tribute **David Kordansky's** booth is packed with the exuberant carvings and digital collages of **Lauren Halsey,** a young California artist who makes embattled Black life in her native Los Angeles the very engine of her work and whose career, at 36, is currently, literally, flying high: An installation by her commissioned for the Metropolitan Museum's roof garden debuted earlier this Spring, and it's a hit.

Mary Lovelace O'Neal, who has a show of six large paintings at **Jenkins Johnson** is from Whitten's generation and also Southern born. At an early point she felt compelled to turn gestural abstract, to which she was attracted, into a political as well as personal medium, and the two are inseparable in her art. The young African American artist **Naudline Pierre**, who shows at **James Cohan**, follows O'Neal's expressionist lead but moves it in a mytho-spiritual direction, turning Cohan's booth into a grotto-like chapel of rich colors and swirling figures.

Elsewhere it's great to see two very different New York artists showcased in sterling midcareer. The solid, organic abstract forms of the painter **Suzan Frecon** carve out a zone of formal concentration at **David Zwirner**. And **Nan Goldin**, with her gridded photo assemblages at **Gagosian,** the gallery she recently joined, takes a victory lap after the successes both of the Laura Poitras film in which she stars and the performative activism it documents.

Performance, like video and conceptual art, doesn't really work in an art fair context. But sculpture does, or can, and it's good to see some here. The New York artist **Matthew Ronay**'s solo at **Casey Kaplan** is a single 24-foot-long work called "The Crack, the Swell, an Earth, an Ode." Composed of dozens of bruise-colored, organic looking (think fingers, fungi) toy-size components, it stretches across the space like a doomsday horizon line.

And a compact show at **Silverlens**, a gallery with locations in Manila and New York City, distills of the career of **Carlos Villa** (1936-2013), a San Francisco-based artist, performer and teacher of Filipino descent whose pioneering multiculturalist advocacy and fantastically inventive art — a marvelous feathered coat here is a cross between a shaman's robe and a chasuble — is only now becoming widely known.

As in the case of Villa, the work of the artist **June Clark** has had, up to now, limited exposure in New York, although it was once her home. She was born in Harlem in 1941, but relocated to Canada during the tumultuous 1960s. Despite, or because of, this driven departure, native country remains a critical subject of her art, evident in the aggressively spiky assemblages and threadbare Old Glorys brought to Frieze from Toronto by **Daniel Faria Gallery**, whose booth is part of a section called **Focus** on the fair's second floor devoted to one-person shows organized by galleries that have been in existence fewer than 12 years.

I recommend lingering at some of these: at a gallery called **Basso**, based in Buenos Aires and New York City, which is showing **Mónica Giron's** knitted wool forms of endangered birds of Patagonia, where she was born; at Toronto's **Cooper Cole,** which has **Jagdeep Raina's** little handsewn embroideries evoking, in words and images, life in a Kashmiri diaspora; at **Capsule Shanghai**, populated by **Liao Wen**'s spookily sleek, wood-carved cyborgs; and at **Mitre Gallery** where you'll find **Marcos Siqueira**'s images of rural Brazil, painted with pigments made from local earth.

The fair also has lots of show, some carefully selected and shaped, others — at **Victoria Miro, Thaddeus Ropac, Michael Werner** — straightforward inventory displays. But one group show, installed at **Michael Rosenfeld**'s booth **(D11)** on the fair's third floor, is exceptional.

All the artists included are women; all the works date from 1973, the year that abortion was legalized by Roe v. Wade. None of the art directly refers to that; in fact, only a few pieces are overtly political in any way: a tiny pistol-packing assemblage by **Betye Saar** and a fantastic, prophetic drawing by **Nancy Grossman** of a face turning into a gun.

But the sheer formal variety of work at Rosenfeld by still under-known figures like **Hannelore Baron** (1926-1987), **Mary Bauermeister** (1934-2023), and **Lenore Tawney** (1907-2007), is radical, disruptive of art historical norms. Collectively it confirms a reality the market has consistently ignored or suppressed: that much of the most imaginative and innovative work by anyone anywhere in the past half century has been by women.

Is recognition growing? Is the art establishment making some corrective noises? It's good at doing that. What I can say is that a close, careful sweep through Frieze New York 2023 turns up treasures you probably wouldn't have found in such quantity just a few years ago.

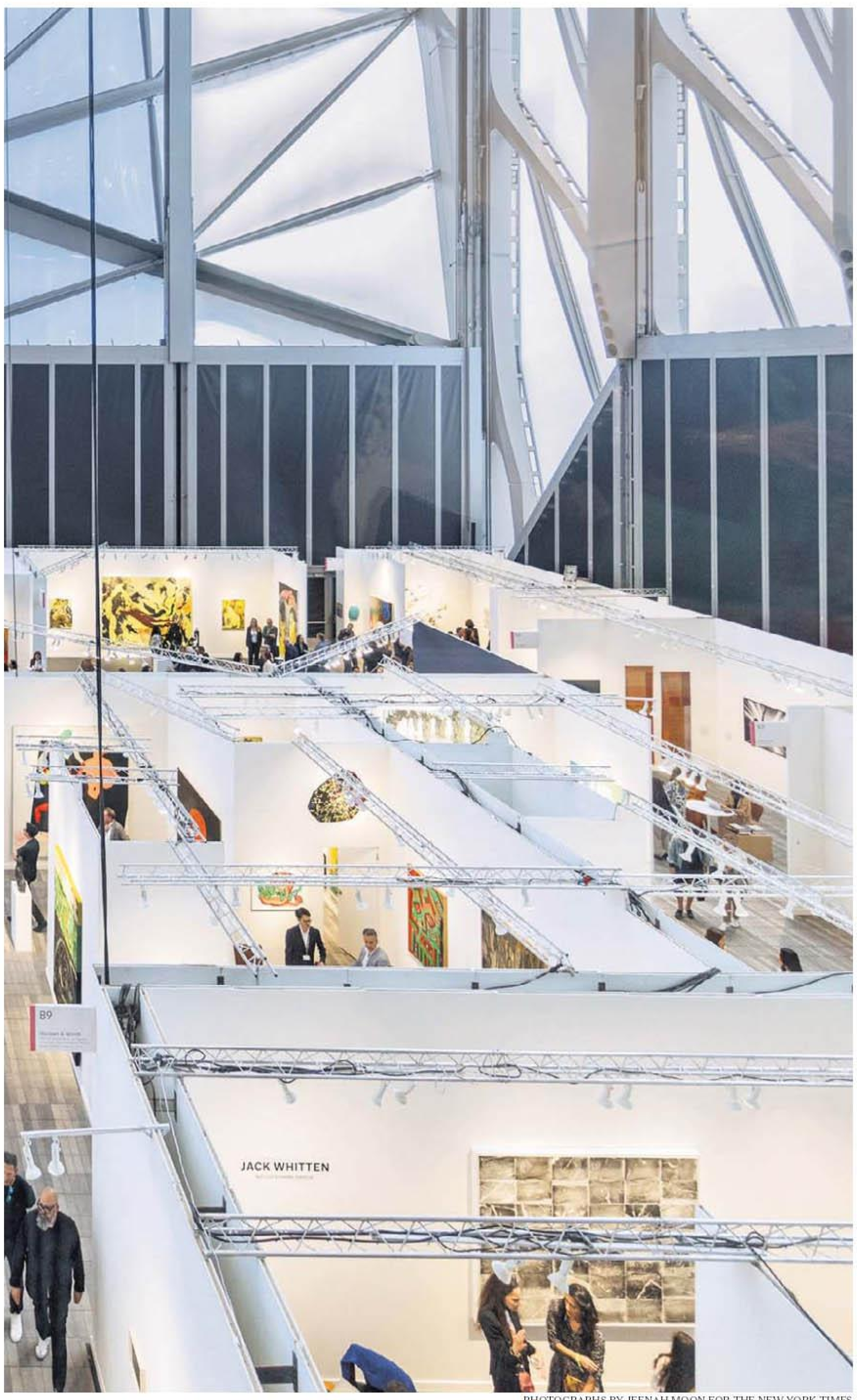
These include dynamite paintings by **Harmony Hammond** and **Joan Semmel** at **Alexander Gray**'s booth, and an exquisite **Bethany Collins** text piece there. **Jac Leirner**'s skinny, spear-like collages at **Esther Schipper** (Berlin) and **Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel** (Brazil) are reminders that this **Brazilian** artist's first major New York survey recently opened at **Swiss Institute** here and is on view through Aug. 27.

The painter **Trisha Baga**, now in space-travel mode, also has a doubleheader (at **Société** and **Gió Marconi**). And you'll find bril-





Near right, Nancy Grossman's "Frontal Gunhead" (1973) at top and "Sighted Gunhead" (1973) at Michael Rosenfeld. Far right, Trisha Baga's "Moths" (2022) at left and "Sleep Mode" (2022) at right, at Gió Marconi.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES







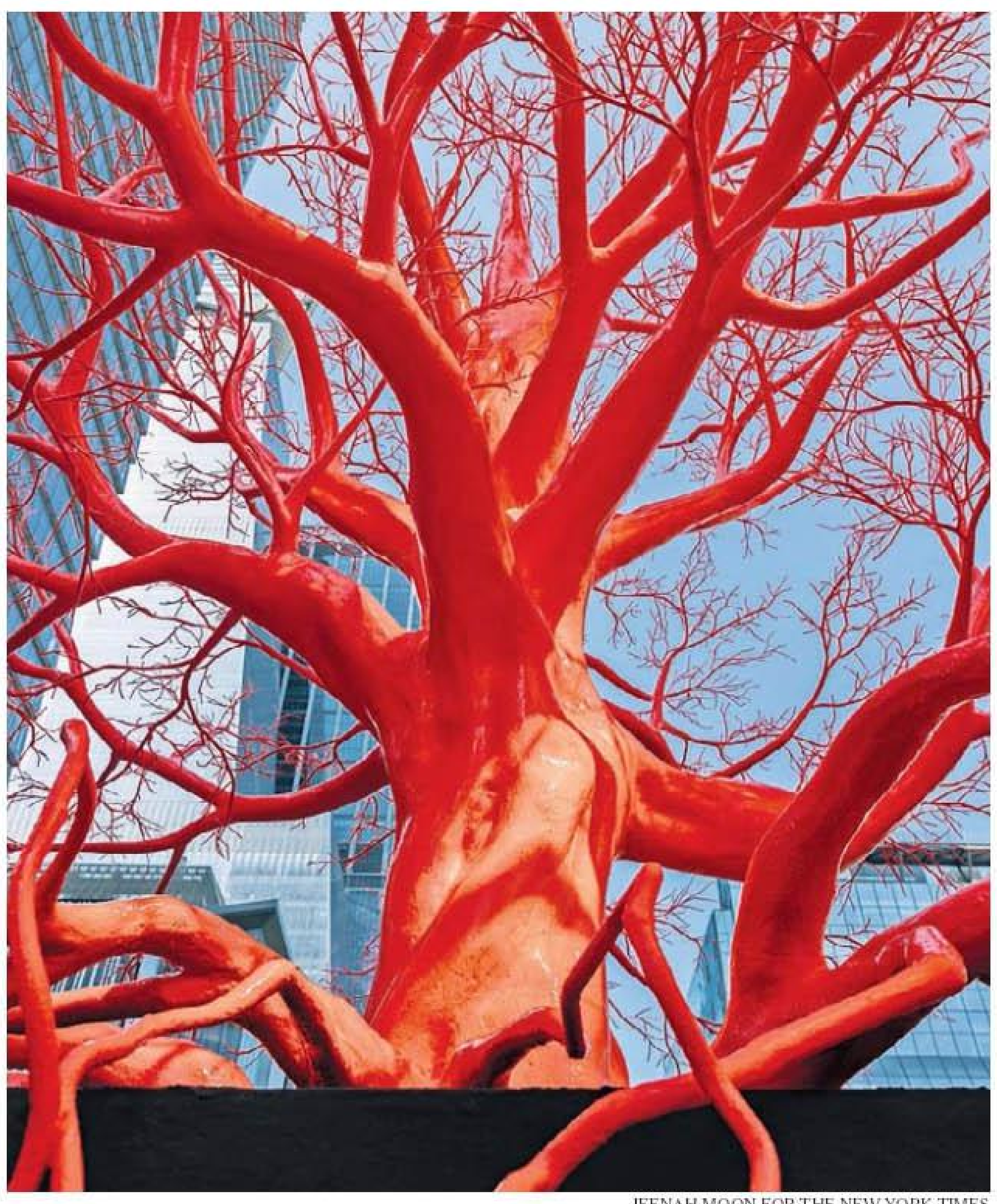
Top, two untitled works, the left from 2022, the right from 2023, by Marcos Siqueira at the Mitre booth. On a shelf are jars of minerals and earth used to make the paint. Center, untitled 2023 works by Lauren Halsey at the David Kordansky booth. Above from left, Nan Goldin's "Red" (2016), "Veiled" (2011-14) and "The Back" (2011-14), at Gagosian's booth.

liant one-off items tucked away: a small leather-and-twine hanging by **Leonor Antunes** at **Galeria Luisa Strina;** in a luscious lobster-red **Mary Heilmann** painting at **303 Gallery;** in a metal sculpture by Kathleen Ryan at **Karma** with a crystalline spiderweb hidden inside, and, at **Miguel Abreu,** a tabletop version of Pamela Rosenkranz's electric pink "Old Tree," which stands, at full height, on the High Line outside.

It's exciting, walking through the show, to experience this slow-building choral effect, worth the price of admission. Now what should change is the current steep price, which puts Frieze New York beyond the reach of a wide audience — including a crucial audience of young artists — just as surely as its island location did years ago.

Enjoy a Spring Weekend in This Fair City

If the past two years represented a slow return and then full-on bounce back to prepandemic arts programming, the array of art fairs this May embodies a spring frenzy. Here is a guide to our favorites in Manhattan, by neighborhood.



JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A detail of Pamela Rosenkranz's "Old Tree" (2023) on the High Line.

Midtown West

FRIEZE NEW YORK 2023 One of the world's largest, priciest and most difficult-to-access fairs, Frieze is back at the Shed in Hudson Yards, this year with more than 65 galleries celebrating the creative spirit of New York City. The fair's "Focus" section also returns, showcasing solo presentations from galleries that have been in operation for 12 years or less. Admission is $76 ($37 for students). *Through Sunday at the Shed, 545 West 30th Street, Manhattan; 212-463-7488, frieze.com.*

Chelsea

FOCUS ART FAIR This brings together contemporary works of more than 35 galleries; this year's theme centers on post-pandemic rebirth and the idea of art as a biosphere. Admission is $30 ($15 for students). *Through Sunday at Chelsea Industrial, 535-549 West 28th Street, Manhattan; focusartfair.net.*

NADA The New Art Dealers Alliance, dedicated to the advancement of new artistic voices, showcases works from 88 galleries, art spaces and nonprofit organizations, including 31 first-time exhibitors. A single-day ticket is $55; multiday passes are $75. Discounted senior and student tickets are available on-site for $35 with ID. *Through Sunday at 548 West, located at 548 West 22nd Street, Manhattan; 212-594-0883, newartdealers.org.*

CLIO ART FAIR Billing itself as the anti-fair for independent artists, Clio returns for its 14th edition. Tickets are free from noon to 8 p.m. on Friday. Admission for Saturday and Sunday starts at $12. *Through Sunday at 550 West 29th Street, Manhattan; clioartfair.com.*

VOLTA NEW YORK This year, the Basel-born Volta Art Fair presents more than 50 national and international galleries, including exhibitors from South Korea, Dublin and Ivory Coast. Tickets are $12 for students and seniors, $38 for general admission and $48 for a private viewing with V.I.P. access and re-entry. *Through Sunday at the Metropolitan Pavilion, 125 West 18th Street, Manhattan; voltaartfairs.com.*

NoHo

THAT '70S SHOW In a project organized by the dealer Eric Firestone, 21 galleries exhibit works by artists active in the 1970s. Calling itself an alternative to the fairs of Frieze, the show — on display in Firestone's walk-up NoHo loft — pays tribute to galleries invested in scholarship and the re-examination of artists from that decade. Entrance is free. *Through Sunday at 4 Great Jones Street, Manhattan; 70sshownyc.com.*

Manhattanville

1-54 CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART FAIR This fair dedicated to contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora presents 26 galleries from Africa, Europe and the United States, featuring work by more than 80 artists. This year, 1-54 moves to the factory district in West Harlem. Admission is $20; a three-day ticket is $50. *Through Sunday at 439 West 127th Street, Manhattan; 1-54.com.*

In Chelsea, the 1-54 fair presents "Sparkling Islands, Another Postcard of the Caribbean," an exhibition of 13 contemporary Caribbean artists — painting, photography, paper, sculpture, textiles and installation. It is the first show by 1-54 Presents, a program of pop-up exhibitions. *Through Saturday at High Line Nine, 507 West 27th Street, Manhattan; 1-54.com.*

MADISON AVENUE
SPRING GALLERY WALK

PRESENTED BY ARTnews | MADISON AVENUE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2023

Free and open to the public, attend expert talks & tours at 60+ participating galleries on Madison Avenue & side streets from East 57th St to East 86th St.

To register for a Gallery Talk, and for descriptions of what is on view at each gallery, visit **MadisonAvenueGalleryWalk.com.**



PARTICIPATING GALLERIES

ACQUAVELLA GALLERIES
ALEXANDRE GALLERY
ARADER GALLERIES
ARLENE ANGARD DESIGNS & FINE ART
BONNER DAVID GALLERIES
CEYSSON & BÉNÉTIÈRE
CHEIM & READ
CHRISTOPHER BISHOP FINE ART
DAVID BENRIMON FINE ART
DAVID NOLAN GALLERY
DAVID ZWIRNER GALLERY
DFN PROJECTS
EDWARD TYLER NAHEM
EMILYFINEART @ FLORAONMADISON
EMMA SCULLY GALLERY
FRANKLIN PARRASCH GALLERY
GAGOSIAN SHOP
GALERIE GMURZYNSKA
GERALD PETERS GALLERY
GRAHAM SHAY 1857
GRAY
HAUSER & WIRTH
HELWASER GALLERY
HENRIQUE FARIA
HIRSCHL & ADLER MODERN
HOWARD GREENBERG GALLERY
HUBERT GALLERY
IPPODO GALLERY
JENNIFER BAAHNG GALLERY
JOHN SZOKE GALLERY
KAPOOR GALLERIES
KATE OH GALLERY
KRISTEN LORELLO
L PARKER STEPHENSON PHOTOGRAPHS
LA MAISON VALMONT
LEILA HELLER
LEON TOVAR GALLERY
LES ENLUMINURES
LGDR
LINCOLN GLENN
LOIS WAGNER FINE ARTS
LUXEMBOURG + CO.
MIGNONI
MIYAKO YOSHINAGA GALLERY
MNUCHIN GALLERY
MONNALISA
NICHOLAS BRAWER GALLERY
OPERA GALLERY
PETZEL GALLERY
ROBILANT+VOENA
ROSENBERG & CO.
RUBIN&CHAPELLE
SHEPHERD W & K GALLERIES
SIGRID FREUNDORFER FINE ART
SKARSTEDT
SOUS LES ETOILES GALLERY
SPANIERMAN MODERN
SPRÜTH MAGERS
STERLING | BOOS
THOMSEN GALLERY
TULIPAN GALLERY OF THE REKA DARIDA FOUNDATION
UPSILON GALLERY
VAN DOREN WAXTER
YOSHII GALLERY



VIA NELSON MAKAMO AND RISE ART



JAVIER SALAS

Geography And Visibility

Touria El Glaoui founded the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair to promote work by African artists.

Touria El Glaoui, above right, founding director of the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair. Among the works on view is Nelson Makamo's "Untitled" (2022), above.

TOURIA EL GLAOUI is the director of the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, which is held every year in London, New York City and Marrakesh, Morocco. The daughter of a Frenchwoman and a Moroccan artist, El Glaoui was working in telecommunication sales when she founded the fair to give voice to art and artists from Africa and the diaspora. It is among the most important events on the contemporary scene, introducing talents like Amadou Sanogo, of Mali, and Johanna Mirabel, of Paris.

This year's edition of the fair runs through Sunday in the Manhattanville neighborhood, at 439 West 127th Street in Manhattan (1-54.com), with a pop-up exhibition of Caribbean artists called "Sparkling Islands, Another Postcard of the Caribbean," and through Saturday, at High Line Nine, 507 West 27th Street, in Chelsea. I spoke with El Glaoui about her vision and how it has grown. Here are edited excerpts from the conversation.

Why did you start with the focus on Africa?

When I started in 2013, it was about creating a platform that would represent and give visibility to artists from that particular geography — the African continent and its diaspora. We say "diaspora" because we realize that a lot of artists of African descent were based in Europe or the United States or the United Kingdom.

I'm the daughter of an artist from Africa, Morocco, surprised that this part of the world was not covered at all and not at all present or visible in the mainstream or the international market. It was not my industry, so I didn't understand why.

Your father is Moroccan, you speak with a French accent, and you were based in London when you started the fair. So how did those three things come together?

I was raised by a Moroccan father and a French mother in Morocco until I was 17 and moved north to study. I came to New York for 10 years. And then I moved to London, to work for a telecom fund and traveled to the Middle East and Africa for sales. I made friends with a lot of artists and realized how amazing the work was and started collecting. I didn't understand why they were not part of the mainstream of the global stage. There was no question about them not being good enough.

In 2013 in London, we were able to [mount] it strategically around Frieze to make sure we had this pool of collectors to come visit. Once we had the blueprint, it just made sense to go to New York, with institutions, curators and collectors that can make a real difference in the careers of those artists. In 2015 in Brooklyn, Pioneer Works, this incredible organization, hosted us for four years. [This year] we were able to take over the space called Malt House, the old Gavin Brown space [in Manhattanville].

Is it curated solely by you?

We have three selection committee meetings a year for the three art fairs, [each with] one art gallery director (a gallery that is not part of the fair), a curator and my team — me and my associate director. It is basically a decision on the quality of a [gallery's] program, but also the role of the gallery in the country or the city they are working in.

And there's an educational component to the fair? What's that?

We created the 1-54 Forum in 2013 — a platform for intellectual debates, artistic panels. One year it was [focused on] the invisible border between North Africa and West Africa, because of the influences of the Arabic world in those regions.

We made these engaging, but also available for free. We published catalogs, really reference books with biographies of artists who had never been published before.

When I started the project, there was something much more important that was happening — a first for a lot of those artists to be published, to be part of the mainstream, to be sold in international art fairs. It was an educational platform, not just a commercial platform.

Who are some artists you are excited to showcase this year?

I'm looking forward to encountering the compelling and often provocative creations of Ronald Hall, a Brooklyn-based painter represented by Duane Thomas Gallery. Hall's narrative works explore the complexity and contemporary experiences of African Americans through the lens of social constructionism. Another highlight will be Mobolaji Ogunrosoye's collage works, which splice photographs together to investigate body image and the impact of societal influences on the lives of Nigerian women. Ogunrosoye's works will be presented by Kó, an art space in Lagos, Nigeria.

It's playtime.

Try the Crossword, the Mini, Spelling Bee and more from anywhere.
nytimes.com/games

The New York Times Games

More Tests Sought on 'Rust' Gun

The film prop handled by Alec Baldwin may have been modified, prosecutors say.

By JULIA JACOBS



SANTA FE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Prosecutors want to send the gun involved in a fatal shooting on the "Rust" film set to an outside ballistics expert for further testing. A criminal case against the actor Alec Baldwin, who was handling the revolver, was dismissed last month.

Prosecutors are seeking further testing on the gun that Alec Baldwin was handling on the "Rust" film set when it fired and killed the cinematographer Halyna Hutchins. The additional tests were requested as the prosecutors work to decide whether to revive a criminal case against the actor.

Mr. Baldwin was initially charged with involuntary manslaughter, but prosecutors in New Mexico dismissed the case against him last month. They withdrew the charges after being presented with evidence suggesting that the gun Mr. Baldwin had been rehearsing with that day had been modified, which potentially made an unintentional discharge easier.

The old-fashioned revolver at the center of the case has already been examined by the F.B.I., but on Wednesday, the prosecutors, Kari T. Morrissey and Jason J. Lewis, sought court approval to have it tested by an outside ballistics expert. They wrote in court papers that they had learned during their investigation that the gun's hammer might have been intentionally modified.

"The modification appears to be related to the notches on the internal portion of the hammer for full-cock, half-cock and quarter cock positions," the prosecutors wrote in court papers. "It appears that these notches may have been partially removed or ground down so that they are less prominent."

The ballistics expert, Lucien Haag, who has worked as a consultant for prosecutors and defense lawyers, would also be asked to determine whether other firearms that had been on the set had also been modified "possibly for ease of use by actors," the prosecutors wrote. Live and inert ammunition found at the scene, as well as powder residue left on Ms. Hutchins's clothing, would be submitted for testing as well.

Mr. Baldwin has denied responsibility for the fatal shooting of Ms. Hutchins in 2021, asserting that he had been told the gun did not contain live ammunition and that he had not pulled the trigger before it went off. He said that the gun fired after he had pulled its hammer back and let it go.

A lawyer for Mr. Baldwin did not immediately comment on the request for further testing.

The prosecutors who filed the charges against Mr. Baldwin had maintained that based on F.B.I. testing of the gun, it could not have fired without the trigger having been depressed. But any modifications to the gun that would have made it easier to go off would complicate a prosecutor's argument that Mr. Baldwin had behaved negligently on set.

The involuntary manslaughter charges against the movie's armorer, Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, still stand. A lawyer representing her, Jason Bowles, has said she plans to plead not guilty. Mr. Bowles said on Wednesday that he welcomed the continued investigation into the source of the live rounds that were found on the set and into the functionality of the firearm.

Galleries

‘Bonnard: The Experience of Seeing’

Through May 26. Acquavella, 18 East 79th Street, Manhattan; 212-734-6300, acquavellagalleries.com.

A kaleidoscopic show of Pierre Bonnard’s paintings at Acquavella overlaps with a more modest selection at Jill Newhouse Gallery nearby — not bad for a practically hallucinatory painter who’s been dead since 1947. Bonnard bridged Post-Impressionism and Modernism; he’s known for his colors, mind-bending and vertiginous, unfurling the full spectrum within scenes others might see as “white” or “blue.”

Where Impressionists had their favorite cathedrals or lily pads, Bonnard’s masterpieces came alive at home. Acquavella focuses on his later years, from the 1920s to 1940s, and showcases the wonders of simply laid tables and balanced baskets of fruit and fantastic landscapes rushing through the windows. “Dining Room on the Garden,” 1934-35, on loan from the Guggenheim Museum, takes pride of place on the back wall: a purpling banquet, the feverishly blue-green sky through the French doors, the hay-toned walls overtaking the chairs, a figure.

There are portraits, too, including a periwinkle bath scene, where the red rug jostles the composition’s peace, and an alluring, long nude from 1920, where the figure is one stripe up the canvas between vertical passages of mottled gold and chevroned blue. The still lifes? Abundant. The tablecloths? Ecstatic. The kinetics of Bonnard’s compositions reside in the way objects and animals relate, appearing both detached and boundless. *TRAVIS DIEHL*


PIERRE BONNARD/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK/ADAGP, PARIS

Pierre Bonnard’s “Grande Salle à Manger sur le Jardin (Dining Room on the Garden)” (1934-35).

Uman

Through June 17. Nicola Vassell Gallery, 138 10th Avenue, Manhattan. 212-463-5160; nicolavassell.com.

In her first solo show at Nicola Vassell Gallery, the self-taught painter Uman, who was born in Somalia and now lives near Albany, pretty much takes the place over. On gallery walls painted deep green, purple or gold, she has mounted 15 enormous, vibrant, unremitting square paintings, each framed in a dark shadow box produced in her studio, and even more small drawings. (Not for nothing is the show titled “I Want Everything Now.”) The paintings’ colors are bold and saturated, and their textures range from slick, wet brushwork to the halting skitter of oil stick. Their forms mostly comprise circles, scribbles and squares, but also a smattering of eyes, flowers, suns, pointy teeth and ambiguous suggestions of intestines, chairs or vertebrae. The references are both cross-cultural and art-historical, but the effect, in general, leans toward the textile; one yellow canvas, divided into a triangular lattice by green and red lines, is also sewn together from triangular scraps.

In a way, though, Uman is a minimalist. Her gestures, like the schematic flowers that let her claim a toehold in figuration, are always distinctly efficient. Canvases may be covered edge to edge, but the paint application is thin. And the moment an explosive effect is achieved, she moves on to the next one. *WILL HEINRICH*


VIA UMAN AND NICOLA VASSELL GALLERY

“Zigzag Rolled on a Blunt” (2023), by the self-taught painter Uman.

Sylvia Plimack Mangold

Through June 3. 125 Newbury, 395 Broadway, Manhattan, 212-371-5242, 125newbury.com.

“I discovered the secret of the sea in meditation upon a dewdrop,” wrote the Lebanese-born painter and poet Khalil Gibran. Sylvia Plimack Mangold approaches painting the same way. Fifteen works on view at 125 Newbury all depict a single maple tree living outside her studio in Washingtonville, N.Y., that she has been painting for decades.

Many of the paintings here are titled “Leaves in the Wind” and capture a green-filled summer rendered, close-up, in lush but no-nonsense brushstrokes reminiscent of Fairfield Porter or Édouard Manet — as well as Claude Monet and his sharply framed compositions of water-lilies.

The “secret” of the tree, of course, is that it is ever-changing, and hence produces infinite variations. (If, in fact, it is the same tree. We have to trust Mangold on this — although Magritte’s notable 1929 painting “The Treachery of Images,” commonly known as “Ceci n’est pas une pipe” or “This is Not a Pipe,” offered a blunt lesson on how truth operates in painting.)

In Mangold’s hands, parts become wholes and the exhibition a master class in synecdoche: the tree is the forest; the painter a human representative negotiating with the natural world. In an age of restless movement and too much information, the practice of painting a single tree also becomes a profound, even radical act of mindfulness, meditation and care. *MARTHA SCHWENDENER*


SYLVIA PLIMACK MANGOLD

Sylvia Plimack Mangold’s oil-on-linen work “Leaves in the Wind” (2019).

Beverly Fishman

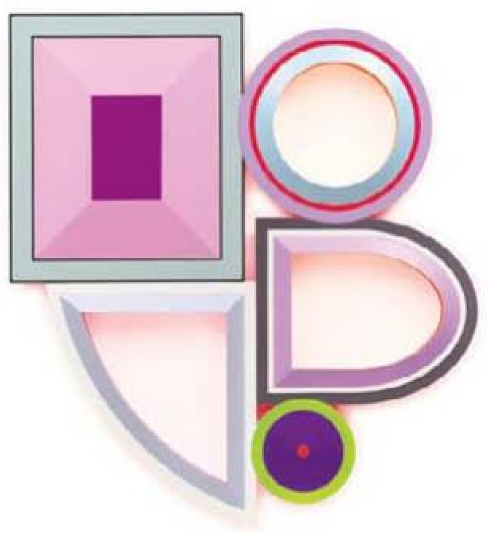
Through June 3. Miles McEnery Gallery, 515 West 22nd Street, Manhattan; 212-445-0051, milesmcenery.com.

Beverly Fishman has been thinking about the cure for what ails us for 40 years. Her candy-colored constructions exist somewhere between painting, sculpture and bad trip: uppers and downers pulsating in fluorescent hues — a medicine cabinet stocked with remedies for being human.

The new work here, continuing her series of faceted, urethane-shellacked wood forms that protrude from the wall, are a work-around to figuration — about the body but never depicting it, geometric abstraction as a feint to talk about contemporary culture, and what we ingest to cope with it. They merge Frank Stella’s hard-edged syncopation with Southern California’s Finish Fetish movement, resulting in lustrous surfaces with an electric hum and smooth cast, like Everlasting Gobstoppers dipped in car paint. Each pill is rendered in concentric bands so that they resemble restless, polychromatic irises, or Wayne Thiebaud’s glowing confections, if Thiebaud painted sherbert-ringed icons of existential pain.

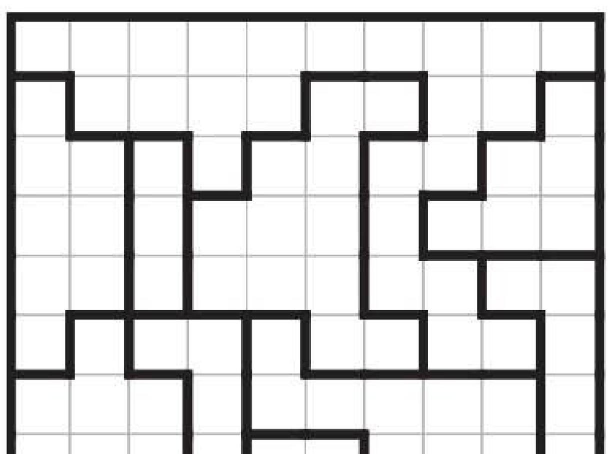
Only their titles, doubling as diagnoses, reveal their nefariousness, as in “Untitled (Osteoporosis, Abortion, Depression, Anxiety, Birth Control),” 2023: healing as dictated by the medical-industrial complex, the promise of a quick fix and the drug dependency that promise has encouraged.

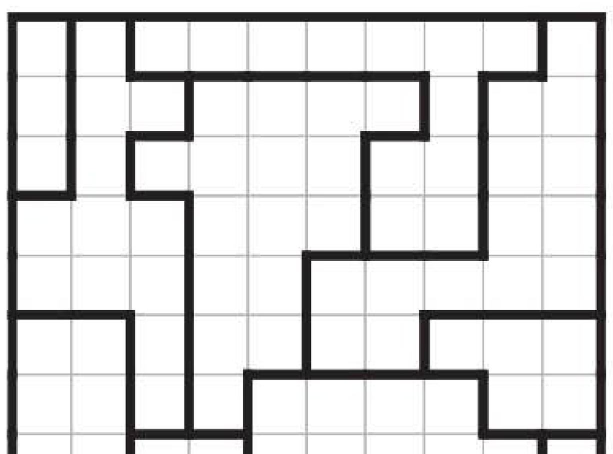
“Four help you through the night, help to minimize your plight,” Mick Jagger sings on “Mother’s Little Helper,” the Stones’ buoyant tune about a housewife developing a Valium habit. Since then, the pharmacological spectrum has only become more florid. That gives Fishman an inexhaustible pillbox, her dosages calibrated to symptoms that never let up. *MAX LAKIN*


VIA BEVERLY FISHMAN AND MILES McENERY GALLERY

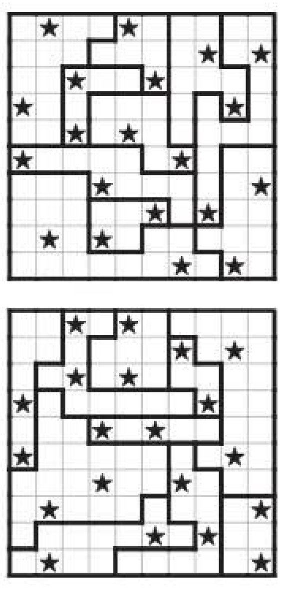
Beverly Fishman’s “Untitled (Osteoporosis, Abortion, Depression, Anxiety, Birth Control).”

Two Not Touch





ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES



Put two stars in each row, column and region of the grid. No two stars may touch, not even diagonally.

Copyright © 2023 www.krazydad.com

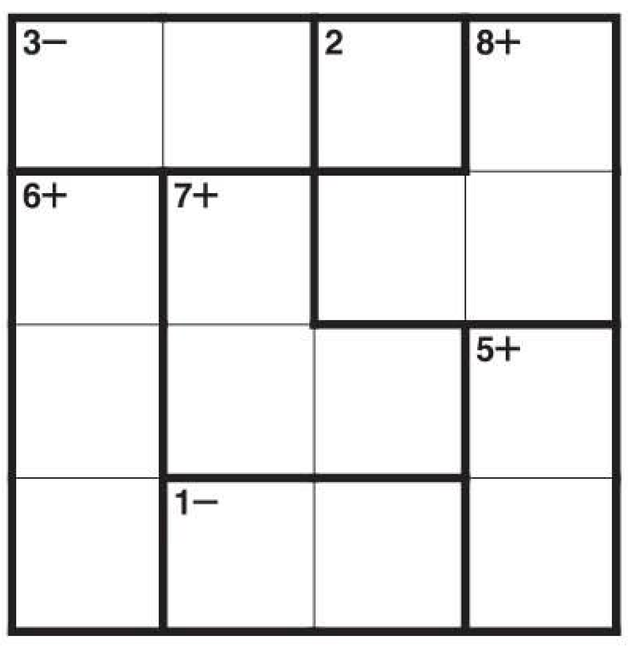
Brain Tickler

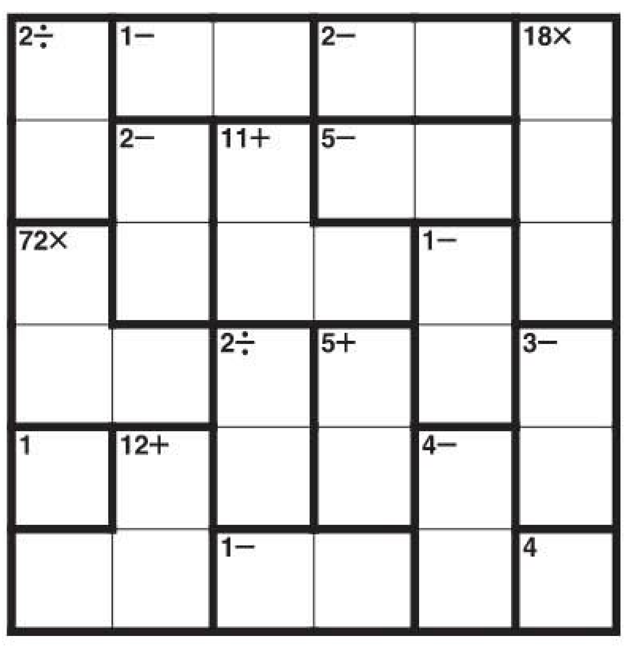
The name of what mammal becomes the name of another mammal by inserting the consecutive letters V-E?

PUZZLE BY WILL SHORTZ

YESTERDAY’S ANSWER I decided against telling my buddies my story about time travel because they hated it.

KenKen





ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES

3	2	4	1
1	4	3	2
2	3	1	4
4	1	2	3

3	4	2	6	5	1
1	3	6	4	2	5
6	5	3	1	4	2
4	1	5	2	3	6
2	6	4	5	1	3
5	2	1	3	6	4

Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

For more games: www.nytimes.com/games

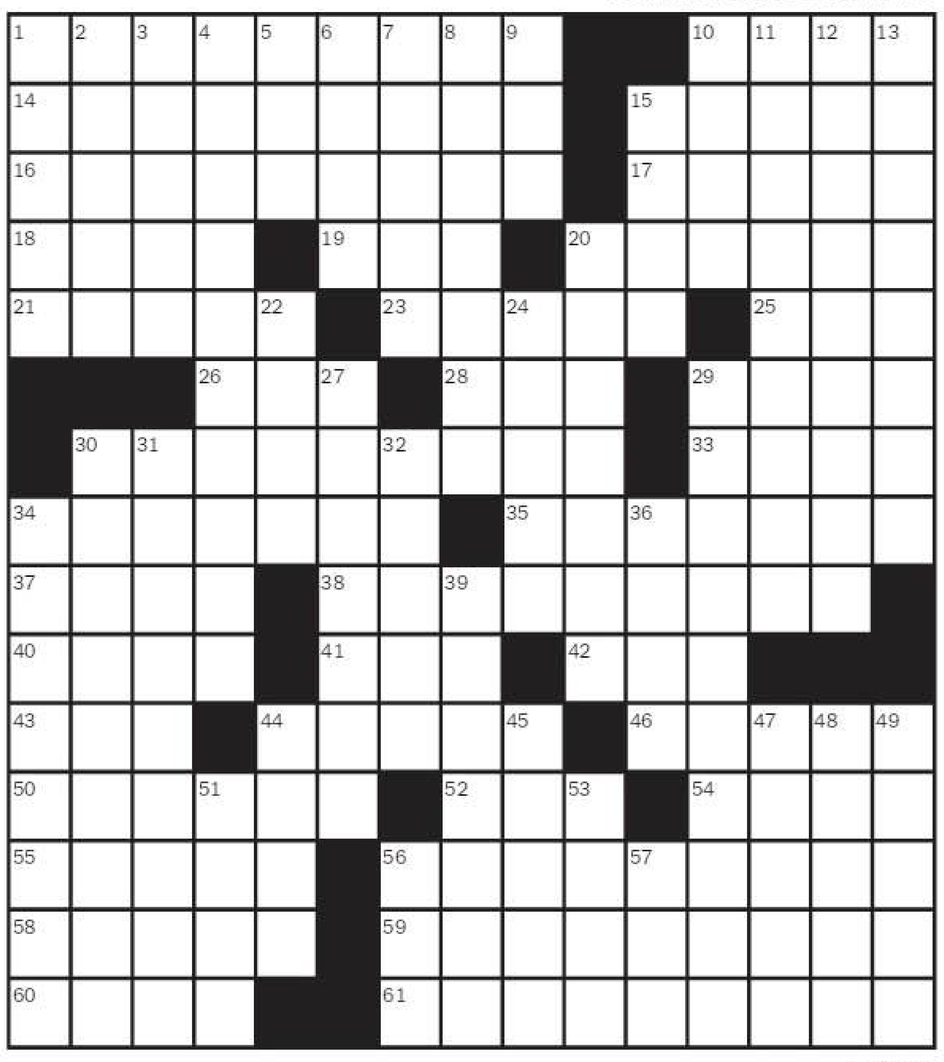
KenKen® is a registered trademark of Nextoy, LLC. Copyright © 2023 www.KENKEN.com. All rights reserved.

Crossword | Edited by Will Shortz

PUZZLE BY DAVID DISTENFELD

ACROSS

1 Subject of the first YouTube video to reach 10 billion views (2022)
10 Fall follower?
14 “Why didn’t I think of that?!”
15 Nominated, say
16 No matter what
17 “The Luncheon on the Grass” painter
18 What often comes with a spoiler alert?
19 Autobahn abbr.
20 California winemaking county
21 Fished with traps, perhaps
23 One-handed put-back shot
25 One of a record 2,297 for Hank Aaron, for short
26 Observe the end of Yom Kippur
28 Use ___ Signal (street sign for bikes)
29 Healthful kind of cereal
30 Quickly, quaintly
33 “Nobody Knows This Little ___” (Emily Dickinson poem)
34 “Ah-may-zing!”
35 Disgust
37 It parallels the radius
38 Sale sign meaning “Act now!”
40 Trough contents, maybe
41 Comedian Wong
42 Series finale?
43 Something that may be found near a hem?
44 Grant
46 Enemy of Lord Farquaad, in film
50 “Do you mind …?”
52 Much of Def Jam Recordings’ output
54 Home to Timbuktu
55 Bearded bovine
56 Hot dog, perhaps
58 Singer ___ Laurie Blue Adkins (who’s best known by her first name)
59 What’s left when kids go to college
60 Stalk, maybe
61 They try not to rub people the wrong way



5/19/23

DOWN

1 It’s not one’s best performance
2 ___ Lange, former “Howard Stern Show” regular
3 Entire essence
4 Christmas party game
5 Place for pen pals?
6 English inventor Benjamin
7 Embrace
8 Sends on
9 “Kitty ___” (2006 Beyoncé song)
10 Word after other or rather
11 A student’s spot
12 Govt. facility in most world capitals except Washington
13 Person held for questioning
15 Exasperated cry
20 Contemptuous glance
22 Result of getting side-swiped, perhaps?
24 Ruined city in Jordan
27 Something parents might give a teenager, colloquially
29 Its offerings end around 2 p.m.
30 Draw into a private conversation
31 “Aha!”
32 Key ring?
34 Where you might order tamago or tobiko
36 Some nursery buys
39 Certain display at a natural history museum
44 First-rate
45 Gets bent out of shape
47 Gushes
48 Actress Renée ___ Goldsberry
49 Garments often worn with decorative purses
51 Related
53 Snoopy and Sylvester, e.g.
56 Like one side of the Cong. aisle
57 What might address a gray area

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

B	O	M	B	■	G	Y	M	■	K	A	N	S	A	S
Z	H	A	O	■	L	E	A	■	A	R	E	O	L	A
Z	I	L	L	I	O	N	S	■	H	I	T	M	A	N
T	O	L	E	D	O	■	O	I	L	■	■	E	N	D
■	■	■	R	O	M	A	N	N	U	M	E	R	A	L
■	S	T	O	L	I	D	■	T	A	I	L	S	■	■
W	A	H	■	■	E	M	I	R	■	F	L	A	P	S
E	L	E	C	T	R	I	C	A	L	F	A	U	L	T
B	E	L	O	W	■	T	U	N	A	■	■	L	I	U
■	■	O	D	I	S	T	■	E	S	T	A	T	E	■
S	E	V	E	N	L	E	T	T	E	R	S	■	■	■
T	A	E	■	■	A	D	O	■	R	O	C	K	E	T
U	P	B	E	A	T	■	A	N	C	I	E	N	T	S
D	O	U	G	I	E	■	S	O	U	■	N	E	N	A
Y	E	G	O	D	S	■	T	N	T	■	D	E	A	R

Online subscriptions: Today’s puzzle and more than 9,000 past puzzles, nytimes.com/crosswords ($39.95 a year).

Read about and comment on each puzzle: nytimes.com/wordplay.

Writing Comic Home Truths

Shea Serrano, for his first TV series, tells a story based on his teens in San Antonio.

By CHRIS VOGNAR



CARTER JOHNSTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

SAN ANTONIO — Shea Serrano wants to show you something.

It has nothing to do with the autobiographical comedy series he created, "Primo" (premiering Friday on Freevee), a coming-of-age story set in San Antonio. It isn't one of his best-selling books, which tackle his favorite subjects — hip-hop, movies and basketball — with the fervor of an obsessive fan. It isn't a missive from his popular Twitter account (435,000 followers and counting).

It is a small newspaper clipping from 2021, framed by the owners of his favorite South San Antonio breakfast spot, a neighborhood cafe where the wait is long but the migas are worth it. The story announces that Serrano, a favorite San Antonio son, has won a humanitarian award from the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. It has pride of place near the front door of the restaurant, where the owner (understaffed on this day and on kitchen duty) came out to chat with Serrano earlier this month.

Serrano quietly beamed, soaking in the familiarity and hospitality afforded by his hometown. This is who Serrano is, more than the TV show, the books or the social media profile: a neighborhood guy who stumbled into something for which he has a gift, then put in the hard work to make sure he could keep doing it.

"This is where I was born," he said during a driving tour of this deceptively large city of 1.5 million residents. "This is where I want to die. I just feel like I need to be attached to something, tethered to something. It's nice to have a history with a place or with a thing."

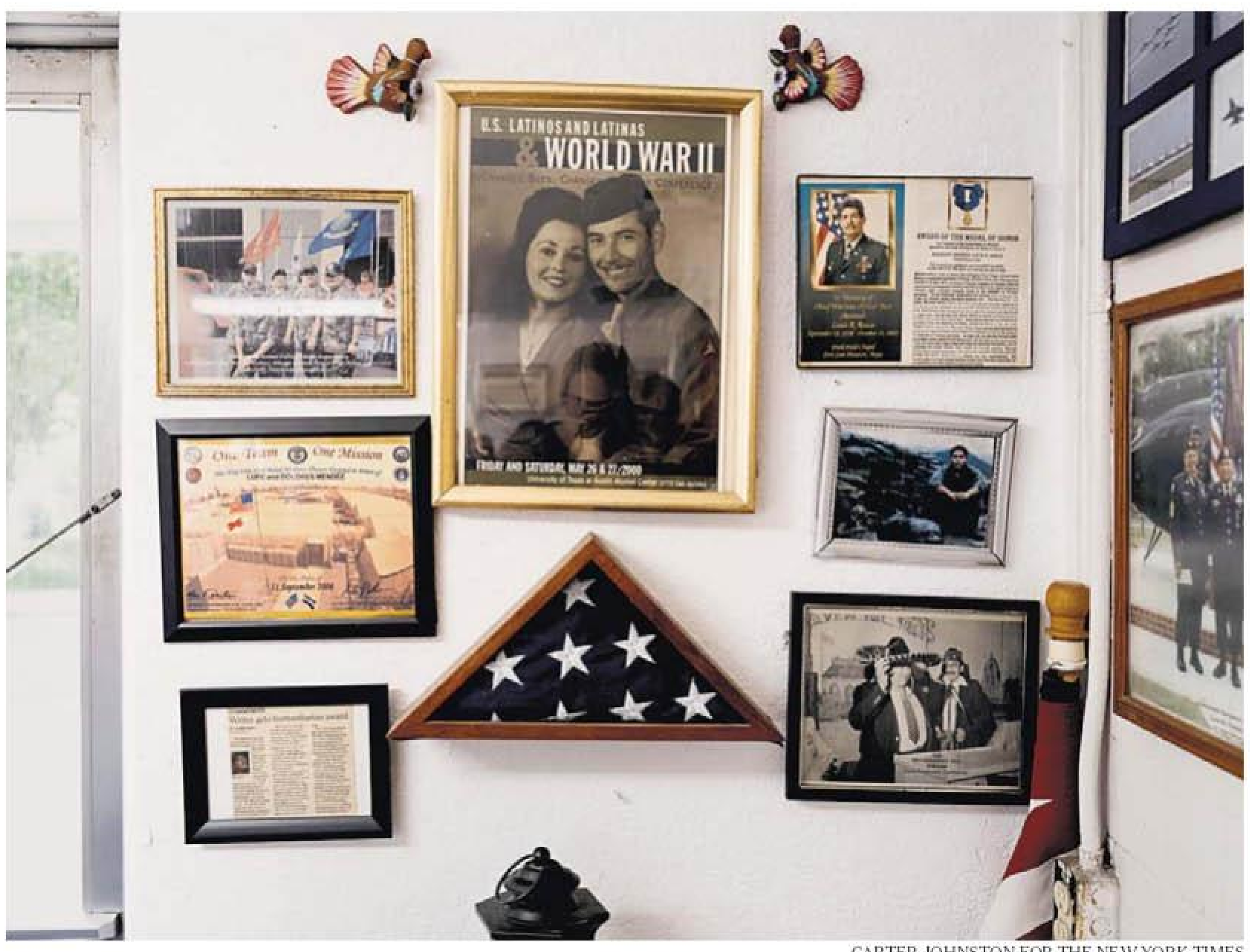
You could scarcely imagine a less Hollywood person working in showbiz. "That's not just true in terms of his demeanor or his personality," said Michael Schur ("Parks and Recreation"), who oversees "Primo." "It's also true of his voice."

Schur added: "He's not thirsty for fame or success. He's been to Los Angeles three times in his life. He's the most laid back guy I think I've ever met in my life. He's just really comfortable with who he is."

Serrano, 41, didn't plan or expect to be the creator of a TV series when he first tried writing in his mid-20s — let alone in collaboration with one of TV's most successful comedy writers. Not long ago, however, his life looked very different.



JEFF NEUMANN/AMAZON FREEVEE



CARTER JOHNSTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Shea Serrano, 41, didn't really consider writing until his mid-20s. Now he has a comedy series, "Primo." Left, in the show, Ignacio Diaz-Silverio, center, plays Rafa, based on Serrano. Above, there's a clipping about Serrano on the entry wall at the Mendez Cafe, in the left bottom frame.

In 2007, he was a middle school science teacher in Houston. His wife, also a teacher, was pregnant with twins, and doctors ordered strict bed rest. This created a problem: How to survive in a big city on one income? Serrano applied to work part time at Walmart, Target, anywhere that could offer some hours. But nothing was compatible with his teaching schedule.

Growing desperate, he searched Google for jobs he could do from home. Up popped an intriguing option: writing.

He started with small local publications: $15 to cover an N.F.L. game; $50 to write about a rap show. He started working his way up, using Twitter to pitch larger outlets. He showed a knack for mining his own life for material, and he found that he had retained a lot of pop culture and sports knowledge over the years. He could use that. And he was good at it. Eventually, Bill Simmons tapped Serrano to freelance for Grantland, then hired him as a staff writer in 2015, and again at The Ringer in 2016. He was on his way, and he returned to San Antonio in 2018.

Serrano writes like a gleeful obsessive, a fan who found a way to crash the big leagues. His books, illustrated by the Dallas artist Arturo Torres — including "Hip-Hop (and Other Things)," "Movies (and Other Things)" and "Basketball (and Other Things)" — read like playful arguments among knowledgeable friends. One chapter in the hip-hop book imagines that Jay-Z has a combination telephone/time machine that allows him to call any rapper from any era to solicit a guest verse for any song.

> **'This is where I was born. This is where I want to die.'**
> *SHEA SERRANO ON SAN ANTONIO*

Eventually Serrano grew interested in writing for a medium he had always loved: television. He brainstormed ideas with his wife, including an autobiographical project. When he entered Schur's office for one in a series of showrunner meetings set up by Serrano's agent, he saw walls lined with posters featuring various shows — "Parks and Recreation," "Brooklyn Nine-Nine," "The Good Place." Hey, Serrano thought, this guy likes the same shows I do. He didn't realize Schur had created or cocreated these series. (Serrano, now: "What an idiot").

Schur was charmed. He also liked Serrano's pitch for "Primo," which he heard for the first time that day: a series about a San Antonio teenager, Rafa (nicknamed Primo, which translates to "cousin" in English, and played by Ignacio Diaz-Silverio), who navigates life with his single mother, Drea (Christina Vidal), and five eccentric uncles. Drea works at a corner store, just like Serrano's mother did.

Though set in the present day, "Primo" is based loosely on Serrano's adolescence; in real life, his father was on the scene, but the writers determined that including him would mean less uncle hilarity, Serrano said. Overall, they took an upbeat, family-friendly approach, even as it depicts a family with its fair share of challenges.

Once production began, Vidal said, Serrano was a constant source of energy on set: "He would come on set every day and just walk around giving everybody fist bumps, giving everybody compliments, thanking everybody for being there and just encouraging, encouraging, encouraging."

Post-migas, Serrano, dressed in khakis and a blue hoodie, drove his Tesla to the home of one of the real uncles, Brian. In "Primo," Brian is Ryan (Carlos Santos), a comically proud bank manager who lords his scant white-collar résumé over his blue-collar brothers.

Brian Gutierrez, who works in the energy industry, was the uncle who helped persuade the teenage Shea to go to college, much as Ryan does with Rafa. (Serrano, who studied psychology at Sam Houston State University, in Huntsville, was the first in his family to get a degree.)

"He was a really good kid," Gutierrez said, "and a really straight arrow." To this day, Serrano said, he has never been drunk. He saw a lot of people in his old neighborhood succumb to addiction and had no interest in joining them.

Which doesn't mean he was an angel. Gutierrez recalled that Serrano and his friends used to go over to his house to play video games. Only later did he realize that his nephew was also perusing his Playboy collection.

Serrano drove us to his downtown office, a spacious loft in a converted warehouse. The door is inscribed with the name of his independent, online publishing imprint, Halfway Books (a play off a line from the hip-hop group Mobb Deep: "There ain't no such things as halfway crooks"). Inside it's like an erudite teenager's dream. Stacks of books and VHS tapes compete for space with arcade games, including Galaga and N.B.A. Jam. One table is stocked with boxes of unopened trading cards. A shelf holds two basketballs signed by the 1999 and 2005 N.B.A. champions, the San Antonio Spurs.

"All the stuff I wanted when I was a kid, I'm going to get it now," he said.

Sometimes he can't quite believe any of it.

"Every week," he said, "there's one point when I'm like: 'What is happening right now? What am I doing? Why was I allowed to do this?'"

From Schur's vantage, Serrano's outsider perspective is what makes him special. Schur still remembers his first impression: "This doesn't seem like a guy who's come through any kind of machine," he recalled thinking. "This seems like a guy who blipped into the world of writing from some crazy other place that no one else comes from.

"That's what I thought he was going to be. And that turned out to be exactly what he is."